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ABSTRACT

This "ERIC Flyer File" presents a collection of digests, minibibliographies, excerpts, and reprints on culturally and linguistically diverse exceptional learners. The collection of 18 items addresses 3 areas: assessment, curriculum and instruction, and parent involvement. The six resources on assessment focus on young Hispanic children with deafness, language disorders in bilingual students, dialect differences, use of interpreters and translators, and preventing inappropriate referrals to special education. The nine resources on curriculum and instruction address bilingual special education, effective instruction for children with mild disabilities, functional language instruction for students with moderate to severe disabilities, empowering students with learning problems, English as a Second Language in special education, impact of disability on language acquisition, learning styles strategies, and multicultural education. A bibliography on instruction and program development is also provided. Three resources discuss parent involvement, specifically communicating with culturally diverse parents, use of ecocultural theory as a context for the Individual Family Service Plan, and a bibliography. (JDD)

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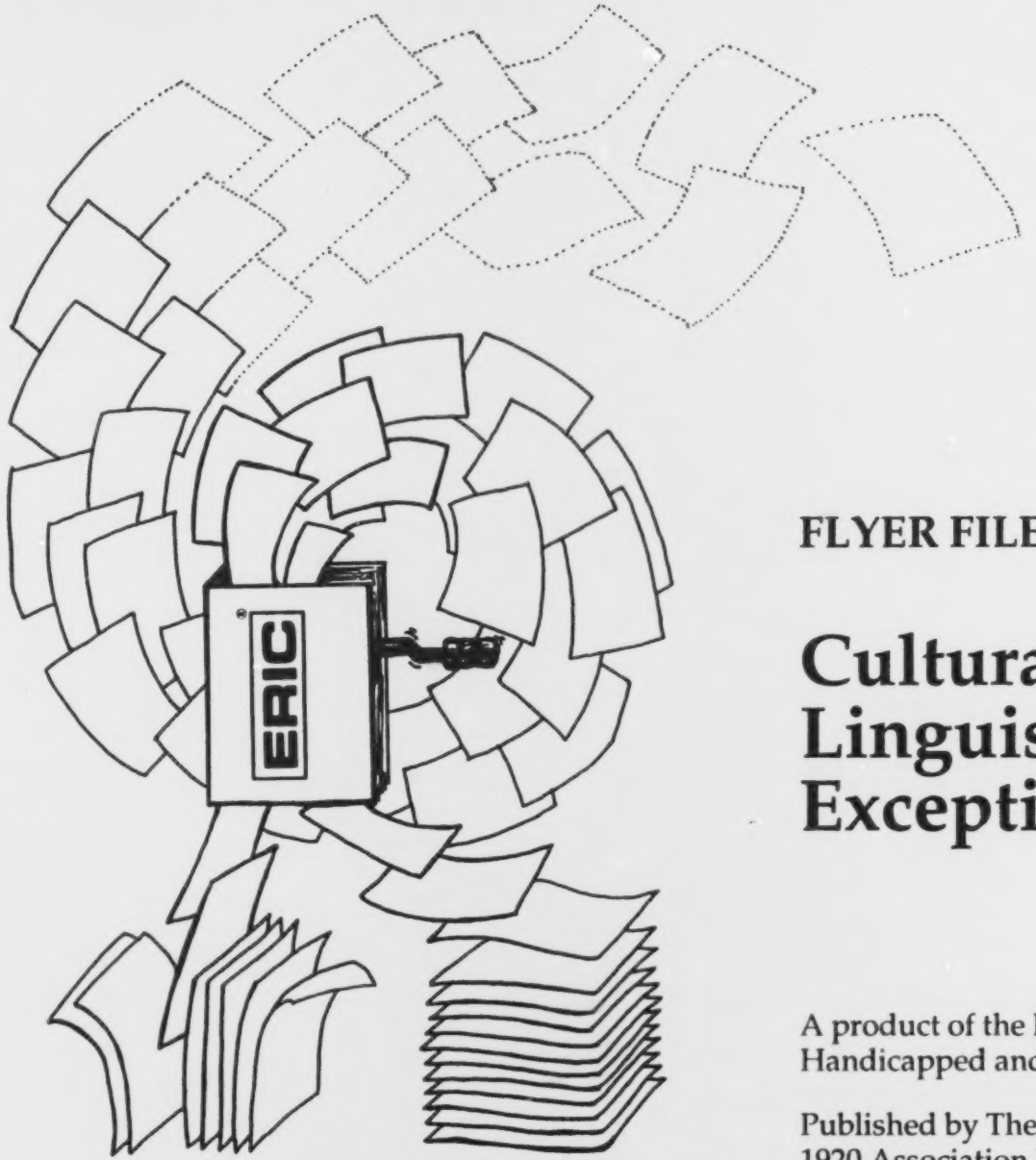

FLYER FILE ON

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Learners

A product of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children

Published by The Council for Exceptional Children, 1920 Association Drive, Reston, VA 22091-1589

EC 300 608

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The Council for Exceptional Children

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is the only professional organization dedicated to improving the quality of education for all exceptional children including those with disabilities and those who are gifted. CEC is an international association with approximately 55,000 members. Since its founding in 1922, CEC has been committed to providing exceptional students with appropriate educational experiences designed to nurture their potential and support their achievements. To this end, CEC has set the following goals:

To promote the special education profession through the establishment of professional standards of practice and a code of ethics for all professionals involved in the education of exceptional persons.

To advance the education of exceptional children by improving access to special education for children underserved or inappropriately served, such as the gifted and talented, young adults over age 18, certain low incidence exceptionalities, and ethnic and culturally diverse populations, and by extending special education to children who could benefit from, but are not now considered entitled to, special education. Examples are children who are abused, neglected, suicidal, drug dependent, or who have a communicable disease.

To improve the quality of instruction by supporting the development and dissemination of new knowledge, technology, methodology, curriculum, and materials on a worldwide basis.

As the host organization for the ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children, CEC is able to support the publication and dissemination of ERIC products to special educators and others interested in the education of exceptional children. For more information call 703/620-3660, The Council for Exceptional Children, 1920 Association Drive, Reston VA 22091–1589.

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ERIC Flyer File

RESOURCES ON CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE EXCEPTIONAL LEARNERS

Acknowledgments

Introduction

Assessment

1 **Assessment and Education of Young Hispanic Children with Deafness**

2 **Assessing Language Disorders in Bilingual Students—Bibliography**

3 **Assessing the Language Difficulties of Hispanic Bilingual Students**

4 **Dialect Differences and Testing**
Walt Wolfram

5 **Using Interpreters and Translators to Meet the Needs of Handicapped Language Minority Students and Their Families**
Sandra H. Fradd and Diane K. Wilen

6 **Preventing Inappropriate Referrals of Language Minority Students to Special Education**
Shernaz B. Garcia and Alba A. Ortiz

Curriculum and Instruction

7 **Bilingual Special Education**
Leonard M. Baca and Hermes T. Cervantes

8 **Effective Instruction for Language Minority Children with Mild Disabilities**
Nadine T. Ruiz

9 **Functional Language Instruction for Linguistically Different Students with Moderate to Severe Disabilities**
Elva Durán

10 **Empowering Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students with Learning Problems**
Jim Cummins

11 **ESL in Special Education**
Nancy Cloud

12 **How Disability Can Affect Language Acquisition**
Patricia Medeiros Landurand and Nancy Cloud

13 **Learning Styles Strategies Can Help Students At Risk**
Marie Carbo and Helen Hodges

14 **Multicultural Education for Exceptional Children**
Donna M. Gollnick and Philip C. Chinn

15 **Instruction and Program Development for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Learners—Bibliography**
Sandra H. Fradd

Parent Involvement

16 **Communicating with Culturally Diverse Parents of Exceptional Children**

17 **Ecocultural Theory as a Context for the Individual Family Service Plan**
Lucinda P. Bernheimer, Ronald Gallimore, and Thomas S. Weisner

18 **Parent Involvement in the Education Process of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Learners—Bibliography**
Sandra H. Fradd

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INTRODUCTION

This collection of digests, minibibliographies, excerpts, and reprints on culturally and linguistically diverse exceptional learners was developed as a resource for educators and information providers. This unique collection addresses three areas of concern: assessment, curriculum and instruction, and parent involvement. All of the material in this Flyer File is in the public domain and may be duplicated for use as handouts, newsletter supplements, mail enclosures, and vertical file resources.

A variety of documents have been selected, including several that were developed by other federally funded projects and ERIC Clearinghouses. The Flyer File format provides the opportunity to extend the dissemination of these outstanding materials to new audiences. Topics were selected to cover a variety of populations including children with mild to severe disabilities, young children, and those with communication or hearing impairments. Please take a moment to complete and return the evaluation on the last page.

Documents range in length from two to twelve pages. Formats include the following:

- **Research and Resource Summaries** translate research into practice.
- **Minibibliographies** focus on selected resources for a single topic.
- **Digests** provide concise descriptions of issues, and answer questions about practices and programs.
- **Excerpts** provide selected information from journal articles or other documents.
- **Occasional Papers** are more lengthy treatments of topics.

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ERIC/OSEP SPECIAL PROJECT ON INTERAGENCY INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

RESEARCH & RESOURCES ON SPECIAL EDUCATION

ABSTRACT 20
OCTOBER 1988

ASSESSMENT AND EDUCATION OF YOUNG HISPANIC CHILDREN WITH DEAFNESS

The low achievement of two groups of students—those of Hispanic background and those with deafness or hearing impairment—has been of concern to educators. There are indications that students who are both Hispanic and deaf or hearing impaired do less well in school than students with either of these characteristics alone. However, the extent to which their low achievement is due to social and communication factors rather than to cognitive or physical disabilities is unknown. It has been suggested that the academic problems of these students are the historical outcome of their interactions with the rest of society.

Schooling the Different: Ethnographic Case Studies of Hispanic Deaf Children's Initiation into Formal Schooling reports a 2-year ethnographic study of the intake process involving the assessment, placement, and educational programming of 12 Hispanic deaf and hearing impaired 3- to 8-year-olds. The report includes an annotated bibliography organized by the following topics: (a) decision making processes (assessment, placement, institutional constraints); (b) language/communication (language development, discourse, bilingualism, sociocultural dimensions of language; (c) education (special education, bilingual-bicultural education, parent/child education, teachers' expectations and attitudes, classroom management); (d) anthropological/ethnographic research on deaf persons; (e) cross cultural issues; (f) research theory and methodology; and (g) needs assessment. The study is also the subject of a forthcoming book. (Reference information is provided at the end of this summary.)

METHOD

Case studies were conducted in two settings: a private school for the deaf and a public school system. Seven children in the private school were monitored from their initial assessments through their initial 30 days in the classroom. When possible, contact was maintained with the parents throughout the 2 years of the study. Testing and placement of two other children in the private school were monitored. In the public school setting, assessments of four children were monitored.

The perspectives of administrators, teachers, assessment personnel, parents, and the children were taken into account in the study. Participant observation, interviews, reviews of records, and audio and video recordings were used to collect data on all aspects of the intake process: formal assessments, case conferences, teacher/parent meetings, written reports (including IEPs and correspondence with state education officials), and home and classroom interactions.

Ethnographic methodology requires that data be reviewed and analyzed as the study progresses and that these analyses be used to shape the remainder of the study. In this study, two important issues evolved: (a) the interface between the home/community and school and (b) the child's initiation into formal schooling.

The project conducted a background survey of assessment practices for intake of deaf Hispanic students. Four State agencies, 18 local agencies, and 25 institutions completed an information form. Of these, 14 agreed to extensive follow-up telephone interviews. Ethnographic methods were used for the interview protocols: each interview was based on responses to the information questionnaire. The interviews yielded information about placement procedures, testing, and assessment personnel; parent involvement, support, and education; and the ethnicity of the populations served.

RESULTS

Gaps were found between policy guidelines and actual practice, especially concerning the measurement of the needs and abilities of the children, and the active participation of parents. The children displayed a variety of social and communicative strategies that were not always recognized by school staff nor always displayed in their presence. In general, professionals defined children's identities with reference to the sociocultural world of the school. For example, a child who did not cooperate in the testing situation was defined as "oppositional" rather than engaging in justifiable resistance to the demands of the situation as experienced by the child. In fact, the experience of testing as a social situation involving the construction of a particular social reality was generally left out of consideration in case conferences, assessment reports, and IEPs. This was often true in classrooms as well.

The source of "problems" was attributed to the child or home environment rather than to the interaction between the child and classroom milieu. It was rare to hear the professional staff criticize any aspect of that milieu or to even raise doubts about its implications for the child's response to schooling. The authors noted that a more accurate understanding of the child in his or her relationship to the ongoing social processes in the classroom could be very valuable to teachers and related services personnel.

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In general, Hispanic parents demonstrated considerable skill in providing strong supportive relationships within the family for their deaf or hearing impaired children, but lacked the knowledge needed to make their voices heard in institutional systems. Although they diligently attended intake tests and conferences, their participation was minimal. Most Hispanic parents did not have a thorough understanding of their role in the intake process even when, in their own view, professional staff had made particular efforts to inform them. Most of the parents had a general and vague idea of how different parts of the intake process related to each other or how the process itself fitted into the overall educational system.

Staff whose role was to act as intermediary between school and parents were not always able to be effective. They sometimes felt they were caught in conflicts between the social and cultural worlds of the school and the children's homes and neighborhoods. These conflicts were characteristic of the positions of administrators, teachers, and testing staff in general.

School professionals were usually aggressive in defining the parameters of social relations—they seemed to believe that this was their role and would sometimes suggest that parents alter home environments, including how to communicate with and discipline their deaf child. This was generally either presented as "the ways things are done" or "in the best interests of the child." In response to this attitude, Hispanic parents usually found themselves in a defensive position.

Many administrators were concerned with providing equal opportunities to Hispanic children and were aware that Hispanic parents participated on a minimal level. They were willing to explore means of improving relations with their Hispanic clientele. However, organizational obstacles to parent participation within both school systems were noted. There were logistical difficulties caused by the organizational and geographical distances between key sites in the intake process. If appropriate programs were not available within the school system, a diffusion of authority occurred which tended to confuse parents and defuse any objections they may have had.

IMPLICATIONS

The authors' recommendations include using assessment and teaching practices that take into account the child's interactions and responses to the class environment and providing structures for increasing parent participation. Contexts for interpreting behavior should include both classroom and home and should be analyzed in terms of the subject's and family's position in a larger social structure, including class relations and the school's assumptions about "structure" and "appropriate behavior," as well as about what children need to learn in preschool. It is difficult to teach children who are deaf such skills as discipline and pre-math, reading, and writing skills. Current pedagogical methods require considerable compliance to teacher direction. Those children who cannot comply may fall behind or be incorrectly placed in programs for students with emotional disturbances or learning disabilities. Educators and other professionals need to be sensitized to the cultural and communicative differences of minority groups such as Hispanics.

Parents can play an important role in mediating differences and potential conflicts between the social and cultural aspects of the school and the children's homes and neighborhoods. There is a need for strong parent organizations that make collective action a possibility. However, the law treats parents and families as individual units isolable from their communities rather than as a collective force. Changes in the law are needed if effective parent participation is to be encouraged. Structures should be built into the law that ensure that parents are provided opportunities to develop such organizations.

Overall, the authors recommend: (a) changes in legal guidelines and organizational structures within special education, (b) training programs for policymakers and educators, and (c) training and information programs for Hispanic parents.

Schooling the Different: Ethnographic Case Studies of Hispanic Deaf Children's Initiation into Formal Schooling. February 1987. 237 pp. Adrian T. Bennett, The Lexington Center, Jackson Heights, New York. U.S. Department of Education Grant No. G008400653. Available in early 1989 for $.82 (microfiche) or $19.40 (hard copy), plus postage, from ERIC Document Reproduction Service, 3900 Wheeler Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22304 (1-800-227-3742). EC number 211 086; ED number is not yet available.

Schooling the Different: Incorporating Deaf Hispanic Children and Families into Special Education. 1988. Adrian T. Bennett. London: Taylor & Francis. Order No. 1 85000 305X (clothbound) or 1 85000 306 8 (paperback) from Taylor & Francis, Rankine Road, Basingstoke, Hants RG24 OPR, UK.

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The ERIC/OSEP Special Project on Interagency Information Dissemination is designed to provide information about research in special education, in particular, research funded by the Division of Innovation and Development, Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education. This product was developed by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children under contract No. RI88062007 with the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education. The content, however, does not necessarily reflect the position of the U.S. Department of Education and no official endorsement of these materials should be inferred.

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RESEARCH & RESOURCES ON SPECIAL EDUCATION

ABSTRACT 23
AUGUST 1989

ASSESSING THE LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES OF HISPANIC BILINGUAL STUDENTS

The difficulty of evaluating handicaps in bilingual students is widely recognized. When a bilingual student is suspected of having speech or language handicaps, the problem is even more complex because it is difficult to differentiate behaviors associated with acquiring a second language from those associated with language pathology.

Four major factors affect the validity of language assessments. First, when a child is in the process of losing his or her native language and acquiring a second language, it is often problematic to determine which language is dominant and in which language the child should be tested. Second, bilingual children may use language in a way that is qualitatively different from that of monolingual children. In fact, the normal process of language loss and second language acquisition may create behaviors that mimic pathological symptoms. This may affect test results. Third, cultural differences and the local environment may influence the child's use of language and thus affect test outcomes. Fourth, the diagnostic instruments currently in use often do not yield enough information about the child's abilities, are not available in an appropriate language or form, or are not accompanied by statistical information relevant to the student being tested.

Because of these problems, even assessments that rely on large batteries of diverse instruments in an effort to increase validity can present an inconsistent, confusing, and inconclusive picture of a bilingual child's language abilities. Recognition of these difficulties can lead to identification of areas in which research is needed.

LANGUAGE DOMINANCE

The dominant language is the one with which the child is more comfortable or proficient. Widespread assessment of language dominance resulted from a 1974 court case, *Lau* v. *Nichols*, which led to the development of procedures for identifying, assessing, and serving bilingual students. The process involves rating the student's relative proficiency in the two languages on a five-point scale. A Lau rating of A indicates that the child is monolingual in his or her native language; B, that the child speaks mostly the native language with limited English; C, that the level of proficiency in both languages is about equal; D, that the child predominantly speaks English but knows another language; and E, that the child is English monolingual.

A survey of 157 special education administrators in six states found that tests of language dominance were administered more frequently than any other type of language assessment test (Bell-Mick, 1983). Many assessments begin with a determination of language dominance, and subsequent tests are selected on the basis of the language dominance testing results (DeLeon & Cole, 1985).

However, it can be extremely difficult to obtain an accurate assessment of language dominance because a child may demonstrate different language dominance in different settings. A study of 60 7- to 10-year-old students conducted by DeLeon and Cole (1985) illustrated this difficulty. The study used the following three indicators of language dominance in an attempt to obtain a clearer picture of child and group language dominance distinctions: (a) information from parents about the language used in the home, (b) scores from the Spanish/English Language Performance Screening, and (c) the school districts' Lau ratings of the students. Instead of giving clear results, the use of the three indicators led to greater confusion because they did not provide similar measures of language dominance. The first described language dominance in the home; the second was an academic test that children tended to answer in English; and the third was most often based on parent or teacher reports at the time the child entered kindergarten.

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Another researcher has noted that the variance in these scores is most likely due to both differences in the methods of measurement and the children's tendency to be proficient in different languages within the different situations (Damico, personal communication, 1989).

LANGUAGE LOSS

Language loss is defined as an individual's change from the habitual use of one language to habitual use of another (Merino, 1983). Although the characteristics associated with temporary competition between two languages are largely unknown, a few studies have attempted to compare profiles of students in the process of language loss with students who are monolingual. For example, comparisons of the acquisition patterns of bilingual and English monolingual children found that the order of acquisition between kindergarten and first grade of direct and indirect object relationships was not similar for monolingual and bilingual children (Glad, Goodrich, & Hardy, 1979). A later study (Merino, 1983) found that bilingual children's production of both English and Spanish increased between kindergarten and grade 3, but that Spanish production dropped almost to kindergarten level in grade 4. The most severe loss of Spanish occurred in children who tended to use both English and Spanish with the same speaker. This alternating use of languages, dialects, or language styles, at the word, phrase, clause, or sentence level, is termed *code switching*.

Researchers have also noted that students in the process of language loss exhibit behaviors similar to those symptomatic of speech, language, or learning disabilities (Damico, Oller, & Storey, 1983; Mattes & Omark, 1984; Ortiz & Maldonado-Colon, 1986, as cited in Ortiz & Polyzoi, 1988). Thus poor comprehension, limited vocabulary, grammatical and syntactical errors, or discourse problems may signify handicapping conditions for some students, but for others they may merely reflect a lack of English proficiency.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

The subject's social milieu and community environment, as well as cultural differences in such areas as concept of time and the role of religion and superstition (Grossman, 1984), can have a large impact on the use of language. In a study of cultural considerations in assessment, Hastings (1981) found that the responses of bilingual students to test items were influenced by lifestyles, the educational system, and the physical resources available in the classroom setting. Hastings recommended supplementing formal tests with informal ones especially designed for use in the home country and on material geared to specific cultural needs.

In a more recent study, DeLeon and Cole (1985) administered a large, multifaceted assessment battery to 60 students and asked two groups, nationally known experts and local diagnosticians, to interpret the students' scores with respect to their need for special services. Greater consistency was found among the decisions of local diagnosticians, a fact that was attributed to their greater knowledge of the children's school districts and the dialects and general language functioning of the area.

DIAGNOSTIC INSTRUMENTS

There are numerous problems with the application of traditional standardized instruments for language assessment. Such instruments typically measure discrete components of language such as phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. These types of measures have also been termed *surface-oriented measures*. They tap so-called knowledge of superficial aspects of language form, rather than true use of language or communication (Oller, 1979, as cited in Russell & Ortiz, 1989). Consequently, there is a discrepancy between skills tested and the child's actual linguistic repertoire (Rodriguez-Brown, 1986, as cited in Russell & Ortiz, 1988).

Additional problems appear when these tests are translated for use with students whose primary language is Spanish. Simple translations and adaptations of existing tests result in lower reliability and validity indexes (Hastings, 1981). If the test is administered by an examiner who reads the items in English followed by the native language, the procedure can produce invalid results. Sometimes tests are published in two languages and the two versions are assumed to be parallel when this has not been empirically verified. In addition, some translated versions of tests are not accompanied by local norms, leaving the impression that English norms are applicable.

Furthermore, translation can change the difficulty of items or of response options.

Words with similar meanings can be more difficult or more limited when translated into a second language. Sometimes this can even result in nonsensical phrasing.

Finally, a test that measures practical intelligence or common experience for Anglos may reflect only the degree of acculturation to Anglo values and practices when used with Hispanics (Plata, 1982).

Given the limitations of standardized tests, researchers have searched for a way to achieve broader measurements that more truly represent children's actual abilities. The concept of *communicative competence* has been used to expand the traditional view of language to include knowledge of when to use different forms of language in real-life situations and with different conversational partners (Hayes, 1982). The emphasis is on communication rather than on correctness of language form. This perspective is the foundation for a new set of measurement criteria, called *pragmatic criteria*, which represent the aspects of meaning in language that are related to the use of language in natural contexts. (In contrast, traditional instruments measure discrete structures of language in a standardized, artificial context.)

According to Russell and Ortiz (1988), pragmatic assessments focus on the interrelationships among the form and function of language, its structure and use, and the linguistic situational contexts of the dialogue. Such assessments provide integrated information about children's knowledge of the functions of language as well as structural accuracy. Pragmatic assessments examine relationships between the speaker and listener, the partners' shared social and cognitive knowledge of the world, and their knowledge of linguistic and pragmatic rules (Prutting, 1982, as cited in Russell & Ortiz, 1988).

A 1983 study compared pragmatic criteria to surface-oriented criteria for diagnosing language disorders in bilingual children. The pragmatic criteria studied included nonfluencies, revisions, delays, specificity of referential terms, abrupt topic shifts, inappropriate responses, and the need for multiple repetition of prompts. These measures were studied in three contexts in conversation with trained researchers: (a) playing with toys, (b) describing story-action pictures, and (c) conversing. Errors in the subject's speech were then counted and weighted. The two sets of criteria—pragmatic and surface-oriented—identified different groups as language disordered. Pragmatic criteria were better predictors of both academic achievement and teacher ratings. The authors concluded that the pragmatic criteria were more effective than the traditional morphological and syntactical criteria (Damico, Oller, & Storey, 1983).

A current study, being conducted by the Handicapped Minority Research Institute on Language Proficiency at the University of Texas at Austin, is investigating the use of pragmatic criteria in distinguishing limited English proficient students who have speech and language or learning disabilities from those who do not have handicaps (Ortiz & Polyzoi, 1988). The 3-year longitudinal study is exploring relationships among various measures of English and Spanish oral proficiency, placement decisions, and student achievement.

LANGUAGE ASSESSMENTS

There are diverse opinions of what the focus of language evaluations should be and what they should encompass. However, most experts recommend that an assessment battery include tests and methods representing multiple dimensions of language, including formal tests such as adapted instruments, Spanish tests, translated tests, or formal English tests as well as informal assessments such as language sampling or analysis of communication functions.

The cultural and community contexts of the student should be taken into account, and many recommend the use of assessment teams to provide a variety of perspectives. In addition to determining the child's language dominance and selecting additional tests on that basis, experts point out that diagnostic criteria should include evidence that a disorder occurs in both languages, not just in English. "Since speech and language disorders affect common language processes which underlie different surface structures spoken by the child (Cummins, 1982; 1984), it is not possible for a bilingual child to have a language disorder in one language and not in the other" (Juarez, 1983; Ortiz, 1984; as cited in Russell & Ortiz, 1988).

In current practice, however, it appears that English is the focus of many assessments. A study of services provided to 24 limited English proficient students and 28 English proficient Hispanic students in Texas found that English language proficiency was empha-

sized at initial and triennial evaluations even though successfully distinguishing linguistic differences from speech or language disorders requires comparison of students' dual language skills (Ortiz & Wilkinson, 1987).

Selection of the tests to be included in an assessment should also take into account the fact that even tests of the same type can measure different aspects of language. For example, a study of various language proficiency instruments—the Basic Inventory of Natural Language, Language Assessment Scales, and Bilingual Syntax Measure—found that each test has a different set of criteria and each identifies different sets of limited English proficient students. Each instrument has a different specific focus on language features and on the values it assigns to each feature (Wald, 1981).

Another study of instruments for identifying children of limited English speaking ability found no substantial relationship between the five well-known language assessment tests studied and found disagreement between the classifications of English proficiency levels and achievement test performance among the tests (Gillmore & Dickerson, 1979).

An additional concern is that students may give the appearance of proficiency in their daily interactions when they are not proficient in all aspects of the language. Once students have become proficient in English as indicated by their ability to have appropriate face-to-face conversation, there may be no readily apparent reason why they should not be administered English tests or transferred to an English-only program. However, data from studies of immigrants' learning of English show that it takes 5 to 7 years to approach grade norms in the academic aspects of English proficiency (Cummins, 1982).

RESEARCH NEEDS

There is a great need to develop valid procedures for the diagnosis of language disorders in bilingual students. DeLeon and Cole (1985) noted some prominent areas in which further research is needed:

- Assessing language dominance.
- Accounting for the disparity between the home language and the requirements of the school.
- Discriminating differences between language disordered and nondisordered Spanish/English bilingual children.
- Determining what should be included in evaluations.
- Investigating native language loss and the process of acquiring a second language, including developmental profiles.

In addition, Ortiz and Polyzoi (1988) have identified a number of research needs in the areas of pragmatic measures and discourse analysis, including

- Developing better procedures for eliciting conversation from subjects.
- Exploring additional criteria for pragmatic assessments.
- Exploring methods of counting and weighting errors.
- Creating more time-efficient analysis procedures.
- Developing a means of accounting for code switching in oral language testing.
- Developing guidelines for considering variance due to developmental language acquisition.

DeLeon and Cole (1985) have stressed that factors that may not have anything to do with language pathology—language dominance, language loss in the native language, IQ, socioeconomic background, familiarity with the types of tasks required by tests, family language dynamics, and other factors—could lead to differences in test performance that could be interpreted erroneously as pathological. The importance and variability of these factors imply that diagnostic professionals should be extremely cautious in interpreting bilingual children's performance on language tests.

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Dialect Differences and Testing

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The fact that lower class and minority group test takers consistently score lower on standardized tests than their middle class Anglo counterparts has given rise to much discussion as researchers, educators, and the general public attempt to sort out the significance of this scoring differential. Obviously, a number of factors have to be considered in explaining this phenomenon, but one dimension that has become increasingly prominent is the role of language differences. Is the dialect of the test taker a significant factor in test score differences between mainstream and non-mainstream cultural groups? If dialect is a factor, what, if anything, might be done about it? These questions seem vital for assessment specialists, educators, and other consumers of test score information, including test takers themselves.

In What Ways Can Dialect Differences Affect Testing?

In some cases, tests focus specifically on language structures, as in specialized tests that assess speech and language development, and in specific sections of achievement tests that are designed to measure achievement in language usage. However, the role of language in testing extends beyond test items focused on some aspect of language. The language used for giving directions, for tapping information in other content areas, and even for interaction among test administrators plays an essential role in testing.

How Can Dialect Differences Directly Affect a Test of Language?

The construction of items in a standardized language test starts with a definition of a *correct* or *normative* response for each item. Traditionally, language tests have limited the notion of correctness to those forms that are found in Standard English. This means that forms occurring in vernacular English dialects are classified as incorrect even though they may be normative for a community. For example, if a language development test classifies as incorrect the absence of the plural *-s* in a sentence such as, *We live three mile down the road*, or the use of a different irregular verb form of *come* in *Yesterday we come down to the house*, the language development of children using these forms as a part of their community dialect would be considered delayed by comparison with Standard English speakers. Defining a correct response on the basis of a dialect different from that naturally and normally used in the vernacular speech community of the test taker opens language tests to a type of "dialect bias."

Shouldn't Standard English Forms Be Upheld as the "Correct" Norm for Language Tests When the Goals of Education Typically Require Students To Be Familiar with Standard English?

Certainly, if a test is designed specifically to measure a student's familiarity with Standard English, then the forms of vernacular English dialects should be considered incorrect. However, the stated goal of many language tests is not to measure students' familiarity with Standard English forms. For example, *language development tests* are typically designed to see if a child is acquiring general language skills, not specific forms of Standard English. The equation of general language development with the acquisition of Standard English may severely penalize children who do not use this variety. Significant language deficits or delays are often assumed for vernacular dialect speakers given such tests when the responses classified as incorrect may simply indicate a natural language difference.

Responses on standardized *language achievement tests*, designed to measure what students have acquired as a part of their formal educational process, may be misinterpreted if dialect differences are not considered. In this case, the role of dialect is more subtle. Most language achievement tests focus on the student's ability to differentiate between standard and vernacular English forms. For example, the student is asked to select the correct response to the following sentences: *Father and (them/they) are going on a trip* or *George (come/came) home and cried*. The problem with items such as these is that they may measure different things for different groups of speakers. For a Standard English speaker, an achievement test focusing on the recognition of Standard English forms may measure what the student already brings to school from the home community–inner knowledge of the standard dialect. For a student from a vernacular dialect speaking community, the test may actually measure an aspect of achievement, if the educational system incorporates the introduction of the standard dialect into its curriculum. The underlying problem of language achievement tests focused on recognizing Standard English forms lies in the comparison of standard and vernacular dialect speakers as if both groups of speakers started from the same linguistic baseline when, in fact, they started at very different points linguistically.

Is There a Method for Predicting Which Language Items in a Test Might Be Dialect-Biased?

Potential dialect bias may be predicted by comparing the items considered correct in the scoring of the test with the dialect patterns of the dialect communities represented by test takers. Linguistic descriptions of vernacular dialects of English would show that many of these varieties use *come* in past tense constructions (e.g., *George come home and cried*) as a regular part of the dialect pattern; they might also show that there are some vernacular dialects (e.g., Appalachian, Black English) that do not require the plural marker *-s* with a noun of weight and measure--such as *three mile*--as a regular language pattern or rule. There are now a number of dialect descriptions that can be used as resources to alert concerned test constructors and

administrators to those items in tests that might be dialectally sensitive.

Are Some Tests More Biased than Others with Respect to Dialects?

Tests that focus on the more superficial aspects of language tend to be more dialectally sensitive than those that focus on the deeper levels of language organization. For example, focus on the way a particular language item is formed, such as the *-s* plural (*three miles*), the possessive *-s* (*John's hat*), or the irregular marking of past tense (*They knew*) involves a relatively superficial level of language organization. On the other hand, focusing on the more basic semantic concepts of *plurality, possession,* and *past tense,* regardless of how they are explicitly marked (e.g., *three mile* indicates plurality despite the absence of *-s, They knowed* indicates past tense, although the way it is marked is different from the Standard English marking) involves a deeper level of language organization. Because the majority of dialect differences typically affect the more superficial aspects of language forms rather than the deeper levels of language organization, the following principle can be applied to language tests in relation to dialect differences: *The more superficial and limited the scope of language ability tapped in a testing instrument, the greater the likelihood that the instrument will be inappropriate for speakers beyond the immediate population upon which it was normed.*

In What Ways Might Dialect Differences Influence Tests NOT Focused on Language?

Because language is typically used as a medium for obtaining information in tests regardless of the content area, test directions and questions are language tasks of one type or another. Within standardized testing, particular conventions have been developed in which language is used in specialized ways. This test language register may, for example, frame questions in a way that is peculiar to testing as compared with ordinary language usage, so that a question is constructed as an incomplete statement (e.g., *To prevent scum from forming in a partly used can of paint one should...*) or a question is formatted to set up a choice between possible answers (e.g., *Which of the following tools is most appropriate for "bleeding" a brake?*). Although such language conventions are different from ordinary, everyday language use for all test takers, including middle class Standard English speakers, these conventions seem further removed from those who naturally use vernacular dialects. The following principle seems to apply: *The more distant a person's everyday speaking style is from the language used in testing, the greater the potential for task interference from the language register of the test.*

Many tests rely on special ways of organizing and talking about language to tap information. For example, specialized notions like *synonymy* and *antinomy* may become processes through which word definition is accessed, but these tasks involve peculiar relationships involving word replaceability or opposition. These are special tasks extracted from natural language usage, where the meaning of a word is likely to be defined through a story example or context that uses the word appropriately. Thus, the notion of antinomy may be legitimately interpreted as "very different from" rather than as a single dimension of opposition, so that *tall* and *far* might be considered opposites as readily as *tall* and *short*. In a similar way, rhyming may be used to tap a person's ability to decode letters in reading or spelling when, in fact, these skills have little to do with decoding. In addition, rhyming patterns may differ across dialects, so that *fine* and *mind* or *sad* and *bad* rhyme in one dialect but not in another.

On a broader, but equally significant level, a peculiar socialization exists that seems endemic to the testing situation. This socialization assumes particular experiences with language, test taking, and an orientation into the experimental frame of formalized testing. The experimental framework for testing calls for relatively *context-independent text*, in the sense that the language discourse is not embedded in the local context or practice. Some individuals seem more prone towards *context-dependent text* when it comes to the social occasion of testing, in the sense that they rely more on the local context and assumed background knowledge of their immediate sociolinguistic community as they enter into the experimental frame of testing.

What Knowledge about Testing Should Educators Have in Order To Be Fair to Test Takers Who Speak Vernacular Dialects of English?

For the general consumer of test score information, the following recommendations seem appropriate: 1) Consider what the test *claims* to be measuring in relation to what it *actually* measures; 2) Consider what assumptions about language underlie the test; 3) Consider what kinds of language-related tasks are necessary for the test taker to participate adequately in the test; 4) Examine demographic information provided in the test manual about linguistic and cultural groups on which the test was standardized; 5) Consider how test results can be interpreted for different dialect groups.

For language specialists (e.g., speech and language pathologists, language arts educators), the following additional recommendations should be considered:

1) Become familiar with the linguistic characteristics of communities represented by test takers; 2) Be able to identify linguistic responses to test questions that might be attributable to dialect differences; 3) Complement standardized, formal measures of language with assessment strategies more focused on underlying language ability in real communicative contexts; 4) Gather ethnographic information on the language use of test takers from non-mainstream communities in a natural setting.

What Might Be Done To Make Tests More Dialectally Fair?

Various alternatives have been suggested for reducing the potential of language-related bias in testing (Vaughn-Cooke, 1983), including the standardization of existing tests on vernacular dialect speakers, the revision of existing tests in ways that would make them appropriate for vernacular dialect speakers, and the development of new tests specifically designed for speakers of vernacular varieties. There are advantages and disadvantages associated with each of the alternatives proposed, and it is apparent that there is no quick fix sociolinguistic solution to the testing dilemma. Educators and general consumers of test information must develop a more critical approach to the consideration of standardized testing.

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USING INTERPRETERS AND TRANSLATORS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF HANDICAPPED LANGUAGE MINORITY STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES
Abridged Version

Sandra H. Fradd and Diane K. Wilen

The Need for Interpreters and Translators

Although language differences among students in U.S. schools have always presented communication difficulties, the problem has become more widespread with the rapid increase of limited English proficient (LEP) students during the last decade. What perhaps distinguishes many schools today is the diversity of languages found.

With the enactment of P.L. 94-142 (The Education for All Handicapped Children Act) in 1975, states and local education agencies have been charged with the responsibility of assessing students in their native language or mode of communication. States are required to give assurances that the native language of students suspected of having disabling conditions is being used in the assessment process. This requirement can be understood to mean that all LEP students suspected of having disabling conditions must be tested by bilingual school psychologists and speech-language pathologists. Professional bilingual assessment services are not widely available, however. Further, few states have comprehensive training programs for interpreters and translators in the area of bilingual special education, even in the most widely spoken minority languages such as Spanish and Vietnamese (Salend & Fradd, 1985, 1986). While professional bilingual services are the most desirable option for assessing LEP students and communicating with their families, the limited availability of such services often calls for alternative solutions. As the number of LEP students increases, the need for these services also will continue to grow.

Because the need for bilingual communication services in the health service and education fields has not been recognized as being important until recently, little effort has been given to their development (Putsch, 1985). Some communities are working to develop interpreter pools and to add bilingual personnel to school staff. Since bilingual services and resources generally are limited in scope, families often are required to bring their own interpreters in order to communicate with professionals, and at times may even use children in this role. When an interpreter from within the family is not available, anyone who speaks the language may be pressed into service. Frequently, interpreters or translators are volunteers who are willing to help, but have little or no training. Using a person who is not trained to deal with typically stressful and difficult situations can have negative outcomes for all engaged in efforts to communicate.

While bilingual assessment for special education services is required by federal law, specific funds have not been allocated for training personnel to collect and analyze the assessment data. The services of personnel working on a voluntary basis usually are not viewed as having a monetary value. Without financial support or value, interpreter and translator services are not viewed as important contributions. In general, because they are voluntary, such services are not regulated, nor are requirements made for their provision. Until programs are funded and available to train and employ personnel as interpreters and translators, volunteer services, even though they are well intended, will continue to produce limited benefits for the students whom they are intended to serve.

The Interpretation Process

In order to ensure effective communication through interpretation, there are a series of activities which need to be carried out while preparing for, carrying out, and following up the interpretation session. These activities are referred to as the *briefing*, *interaction*, and *debriefing* processes.

Briefing

The professional using interpreter services should brief the interpreter before the interpretation sessions so that the purpose, plans, and expectations for the session can be communicated and both parties can prepare to work as a team (Fradd, 1990; Langdon, 1983, 1988). For example, in an assessment situation, the psychologist needs to explain the protocol of assessment along with issues such as standard administration, rapport-building, confidentiality, impartiality, and avoidance of prompting, commenting on responses, or adding or deleting information. Additionally, the psychologist should familiarize the interpreter with the evaluation instruments, explain the role of all participants (i.e., psychologist, interpreter, student), and make sure the interpreter understands the types of recordings to be made (Wilen, 1989; Wilen

& Sweeting, 1986). If possible, the interpreter should be made aware of any unusual circumstances with the child which may surprise or distract him or her, such as reported hyperactivity or self-stimulating behaviors. Best practice indicates that interpreters would go through the process of taking the test in order to comprehend the requirements. If interpreters are not given sufficient training and briefing, they may feel they are failing in their roles as interpreters if a student does not respond correctly during assessment. As a result of participating in the assessment process, interpreters should be able to inform the professional of any cultural and language factors which may impact on the interpretation session. They should be able to discuss information on cultural or linguistic difficulties after the student has left the assessment setting.

Similar briefing requirements are needed for interpreters working with teachers and other school personnel during a meeting with a student's family members. Prior to the meeting, the interpreter meets with the person directing the meeting. An agenda is established and the key points are discussed. The technical terms which will be used are reviewed. Potential difficulties in providing meaning for these terms are considered. Cultural aspects of the meeting are also discussed. Seating arrangements are established. Points at which the interpreter will summarize the interaction are agreed upon. Copies of the agenda can be made for all persons attending the meeting. If the professional feels comfortable with the arrangement, the interpreter can make appropriate introductions, inform the family of the purpose of the meeting, and provide them with the information contained in the agenda. In order for the professional to remain involved in the meeting, there must be agreed upon times at which the communications are summarized in English. Questions or concerns which the family may raise must be conveyed to the professional. The manner in which communications are to be carried out must be agreed upon prior to the meeting. Different arrangements may be made depending upon the type of meeting held and the participants involved.

Interaction

During the meeting, the agenda can be used as a guide for carrying out the interactions. The professional using the interpreter services should be closely attuned to the verbal and nonverbal interactions of all parties involved and should intervene as necessary. The agenda also serves as a framework for making notes about nonverbal behaviors which the professional may want to discuss with the interpreter after the session. The session should be temporarily halted if the parent or student begins to show signs of possible distress or misunderstanding. For example, through an interpreter, a parent might understand a recommendation for full-time placement for students with emotional disabilities as a residential placement, rather than placement during the school day, and the recommendation may need to be explained again. The parent might be encouraged to visit the instructional setting in order to gain a clearer understanding of what actually occurs there.

Debriefing

After the interpretation session, a debriefing period is recommended, during which behavior and outcomes are discussed along with any questions, problems or concerns about the meaning of the communication. Debriefing involves an exchange of information between the interpreter and professional for purposes of clarifying and understanding what transpired during the interpretation session. For instance, if a Haitian-Creole-speaking examinee had difficulty with singular and plural nouns on the English part of an assessment for which the interpreter only translated the directions, the interpreter can inform the evaluation specialist that these differentiations are not made in Haitian-Creole (Savain, 1989). The interpreter can also provide information about the level of the student's language skills in his or her native language, whether the student is from the country or city, and whether the student has any seemingly unusual speech patterns or communication difficulties. In addition, the interpreter can also provide further information about cultural influences on behavior, attitudes, values, and performance. For example, the interpreter may explain life on a kibbutz in Israel to a professional working with a Hebrew-speaking family from that background. If a student gives a response that may not have appeared on a test protocol as correct, but which is regionally acceptable, this can be communicated during debriefing as well. Sometimes the communication can become quite animated. From observing nonverbal interactions, the education professional can gain an understanding of what transpired which is very different from what actually occurred. Explanations of both verbal and nonverbal communication help to assist the educator in understanding cultural differences and in remaining an effective part of the communication process (Garrido, 1989).

Similar briefing, interaction, and debriefing activities are carried out during meetings with families.

The Translation Process

Like the interpretation process, the translation process should involve the steps of briefing before and debriefing after the translation. The translator and professional requesting the services should have an open and ongoing communication. In the school setting, the use of prepared, rather than sight or instantaneous, translations is recommended whenever possible (Fradd, 1990). Prepared translations give the translator time to use a dictionary, to consult with other speakers of the language, to consult with the user of the service, to seek feedback, and to revise the translations before formal dissemination. It is recommended that translations be reviewed by more than one native speaker as a check on accuracy (Dade County Public Schools, 1982). As a further check, translations can be translated back from the non-English language into English or vice-versa.

Because many of the English terms and concepts used by educators, speech-language pathologists, social workers, psychologists, and other professionals cannot be directly and meaningfully translated into other languages, brief descriptions may have to be given in the second language. For example, in many languages, there appear to be no direct or standard translations for many of the English exceptionalities such as "specific learning disabilities" or "educable mentally handicapped" or for many terms common to the school setting such as "monitor, written excuse, report card," etc. Once specific terms and concepts or descriptions of such terms and concepts are translated into a second language, a list of such terms can be prepared for dissemination or publication. In this way the same translation of terms can be consistently used within a particular school system or discipline.

Relative to testing, some translations of English tests are published and others are done on a more informal basis. In both cases, users of these translated tests should recognize their limitations. Some test translations may contain culturally charged content such as the picture of the Statue of Liberty on the Spanish translation of the *Expressive One-Word Picture*

Vocabulary Test (Diaz, Levine, Patterson, Sweeting, & Wilen, 1983). Some concepts that exist in English may not exist or may differ in the other language. For example, the word "parent," as opposed to "mother" or "father" may be misunderstood by many Haitian-Creole speakers (Savain, 1989).

Some LEP students in U.S. schools speak a variety of a language that has many borrowings from English, and they may have difficulty with monolingual translations. Even within a particular language, there may be several different, but equally correct ways to say the same word depending on one's country of origin. For example, a "kite" could be "cometa" in Spain, and "papalote" in Cuba and Mexico (Wilen & Sweeting, 1986). Translation often fails to take multiple acceptable responses into account. Additionally, words may have different levels of difficulty across languages or dialects, and it cannot be assumed that the psychometric properties of the original test and the translation are comparable (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education, 1985).

An alternative to using translations of English tests is to develop informal tests in the target language. Translators can be valuable assets in this regard. For example, translators can assist psychologists in developing informal measures of alphabet and number skills, knowledge of body parts, color concepts, and basic reading and written language skills in a target language for which formal tests may be unavailable. Such information is helpful in gaining knowledge about the student's pre-academic and academic skill development in his or her native language and would be important in educational planning.

Translation services are also important in communicating information about the school to students' families. School events, field trips, meetings, and other information which keep parents aware of school happenings can easily be provided through translations. Some schools translate student policy documents and regulations. Others provide parents and students with written explanations of cultural events, such as proms and senior days, in their non-English languages. Translations informing families about students' accomplishments can have an especially powerful influence in promoting family interactions and participation within the school. For example, one principal routinely provides translations of all written communications in the six languages present in his school. He encourages positive messages about student achievement in a variety of different formats (Davis, 1989). However, it should be realized that some minority languages are not usually written or read by individuals with limited education. Consequently, a written message sent home to parents may not be understood. An alternate way of communicating with many parents is by means of recorded messages on audiocassette. For example, the Hmong, whose language is not usually written, communicate with each other by means of cassettes.

Understanding Key Concepts and Procedures

Just as interpreters and translators in the field of law and medicine need specialized knowledge of legal and medical terminology, interpreters and translators in the school setting need training in key concepts and procedures related to their role and responsibilities. Though some broad concepts such as briefing and debriefing generalize across roles, others are situation specific. Interpreters and translators in the schools need knowledge of the tools of the trade, forms, procedures, techniques, and tests utilized by those with whom they work. For example, interpreters working in a school office need training in office procedures such as telephone decorum and registration and withdrawal procedures. Those working with school social workers need training in the protocol of home visitation, adaptive behavior assessment, and clinical interviewing. Those interpreting for school psychologists need knowledge of the protocol of psychological assessment, consultation, counseling, and conferencing. Those interpreting for exceptional student education staffings need training relative to the exceptionalities, eligibility, placement and planning documents, and procedural safeguards.

All interpreters and translators are not suitable for every assignment within an educational setting. Some roles are more specialized, requiring much more expertise and sensitivity than others. The skills and experience needed to communicate a simple message to a non-English-speaking parent in a school office would be far less complex than those required to interpret for school social workers, school psychologists, or due process hearings.

Service delivery could be greatly enhanced if standard forms and lists of key concepts, terms, and procedures could be pre-translated for the various disciplines and roles and utilized by interpreters and translators on a consistent basis. These translations could be distributed separately or as part of a procedures handbook to facilitate quality service delivery. Additionally, it would be beneficial to develop a cadre of interpreters and translators skilled in working with specific disciplines and for the same interpreters and translators to work with the same professionals on an ongoing basis. In this way, a relationship and team approach can be established.

It is important for those using interpreters and translators to realize that sessions where a second language is used will likely be more lengthy than those where such services are not needed. Extra time should be allotted and those involved should be prepared for the extra time commitment in advance.

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Preventing Inappropriate Referrals of Language Minority Students to Special Education

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INTRODUCTION

The reasons that students experience academic failure can be organized into three broad categories (adapted from Adelman, 1970). The first type of learning problem (Type I) occurs when students are in classroom environments which do not accommodate their individual differences or learning styles. For example, limited-English-proficient (LEP) students who need native language or English-as-a-second-language (ESL) instruction, but who are taught solely in English without any adaptation of the curricula, can be expected to experience academic difficulties. Other children have achievement difficulties (Type II), but must be served in the regular classroom because their problems cannot be attributed to handicapping conditions. A Type II student who has not learned to read due to excessive absences, for instance, can overcome these deficits when instruction is individualized, or when remediation programs are provided. Type III children, on the other hand, have major disorders which interfere with the teaching-learning process. Because they are handicapped, these students require special education instruction to prepare them to be successfully mainstreamed into regular classrooms and to assure that they achieve their maximum potential.

Failure to distinguish Types I and II from Type III learning problems results in the inappropriate referral of language minority students to special education and contributes to the disproportionate representation of these students in special education, particularly in classes for the learning disabled (Tucker, 1981; Ortiz & Yates, 1983; Cummins, 1984). Examination of characteristics of limited-English-proficient students in programs for the learning disabled (Cummins, 1984; Ortiz et al., 1985) and the speech and language handicapped (Ortiz, Garcia, Wheeler, & Maldonado-Colon, 1986) suggests that neither the data gathered as part of the referral and evaluation process nor the decisions made using these data reflect that professionals adequately understand limited English proficiency, second language acquisition, cultural and other differences which mediate students' learning. These findings support a growing body of literature indicating that many students served in special education experience difficulties which are "pedagogically induced" (Cummins, 1984).

Some would argue that there is no harm in placing students who are already failing in the regular classroom into special education where they will get individualized instruction from teachers who are specially trained to remediate learning problems. Wilkinson and Ortiz (1986), however, found that after three years of special education placement, Hispanic students who were classified as learning disabled had actually lost ground. Their verbal and performance IQ scores were lower than they had been at initial entry into special education and their achievement scores were at essentially the same level as at entry. Neither regular education nor special education programs adequately served the academic needs of these language minority students, a situation which further underscores the need for prereferral intervention. Otherwise, Type I and II students will experience the stigma of being labeled as handicapped without significantly improving their educational status.

USING TEACHER ASSISTANCE TEAMS FOR PREREFERRAL INTERVENTION

To address issues of inappropriate referral and placement of minority children in special education, one must examine the *quality* of instruction provided in the mainstream and the *validity* of referral and assessment processes (Heller, Holtzman & Messick, 1982). Such examination can be routinely provided through the implementation of a prereferral intervention process in which teachers are helped to remediate students' difficulties in the context of the regular classroom before a special education referral is considered.

An effective prereferral process can help distinguish achievement difficulties that are associated with a failure to accommodate individual differences from problems that stem from handicapping conditions.

Chalfant and Pysh (1981) recommend the use of Teacher Assistance Teams (TAT), whereby committees comprised of regular classroom teachers elected by their peers facilitate **prereferral problem-solving.** The Teacher Assistance Team and the referring teacher meet together to discuss problems which are becoming apparent, brainstorm possible solutions, and develop an action plan which is then implemented by the referring teacher with the support of team members. The team conducts follow-up meetings to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed interventions and to develop other instructional recommendations if necessary. It is the Teacher Assistance Team which ultimately decides whether the student should be referred to special education.

Unlike most special education *referral* committees, Teacher Assistance Teams do not involve special education personnel (e.g., special education teachers or psychologists), except when they are invited to serve as consultants to the committee. This committee structure emphasizes that the TAT is under the authority and is the responsibility of the **regular** education system. It is this authority which distinguishes the **prereferral** from the **referral** process. Although in practice referral committees are considered a regular education function, the involvement of special education personnel frequently overshadows this intent, making it easier to move students into special education. The failure of referral committees to serve as gatekeepers to special education is indicated by the high referral-to-assessment-to-placement rates (75-90%) reported in the literature (Reynolds, 1984).

There are several benefits to the use of Teacher Assistance Teams. Teachers are provided a day-to-day peer problem-solving unit within their school building and thus do not have to experience long delays until external support can be provided (Chalfant, Pysh, & Moultrie, 1979). Moreover, a collaborative learning community is established since the team process actually provides continuous staff development focused on management of instruction and students for all persons involved. Finally, the use of TAT serves to reduce the number of inappropriate referrals to special education because most problems can be taken care of by regular education personnel.

A PREREFERRAL MODEL FOR LANGUAGE MINORITY STUDENTS

The key to success of Teacher Assistance Teams is the quality of the brainstorming and of the strategy selection process. These require that team members understand the characteristics of effective teaching and classroom and behavior management, and that they have an in-depth understanding of the student populations they serve so that instructional recommendations are appropriate to the needs and background characteristics of students. Moreover, team members must understand that a variety of factors can contribute to students' difficulties, including the characteristics of classrooms, programs and teachers.

The prereferral model presented in Figure 1 (see page 3) provides valuable insights for classroom teachers and team members regarding potential sources of student difficulties and can help them distinguish Types I and II from Type III problems. The model attempts to build upon existing prereferral efforts (Graden, Casey & Christenson, 1985; Heller, Holtzman & Messick, 1982; Tucker, 1981) by raising a series of questions which must be addressed before a referral to special education is initiated. While many of the questions are appropriate for any student, an effort has been made to identify questions particularly germane to students in bilingual education and English-as-a-second-language programs.

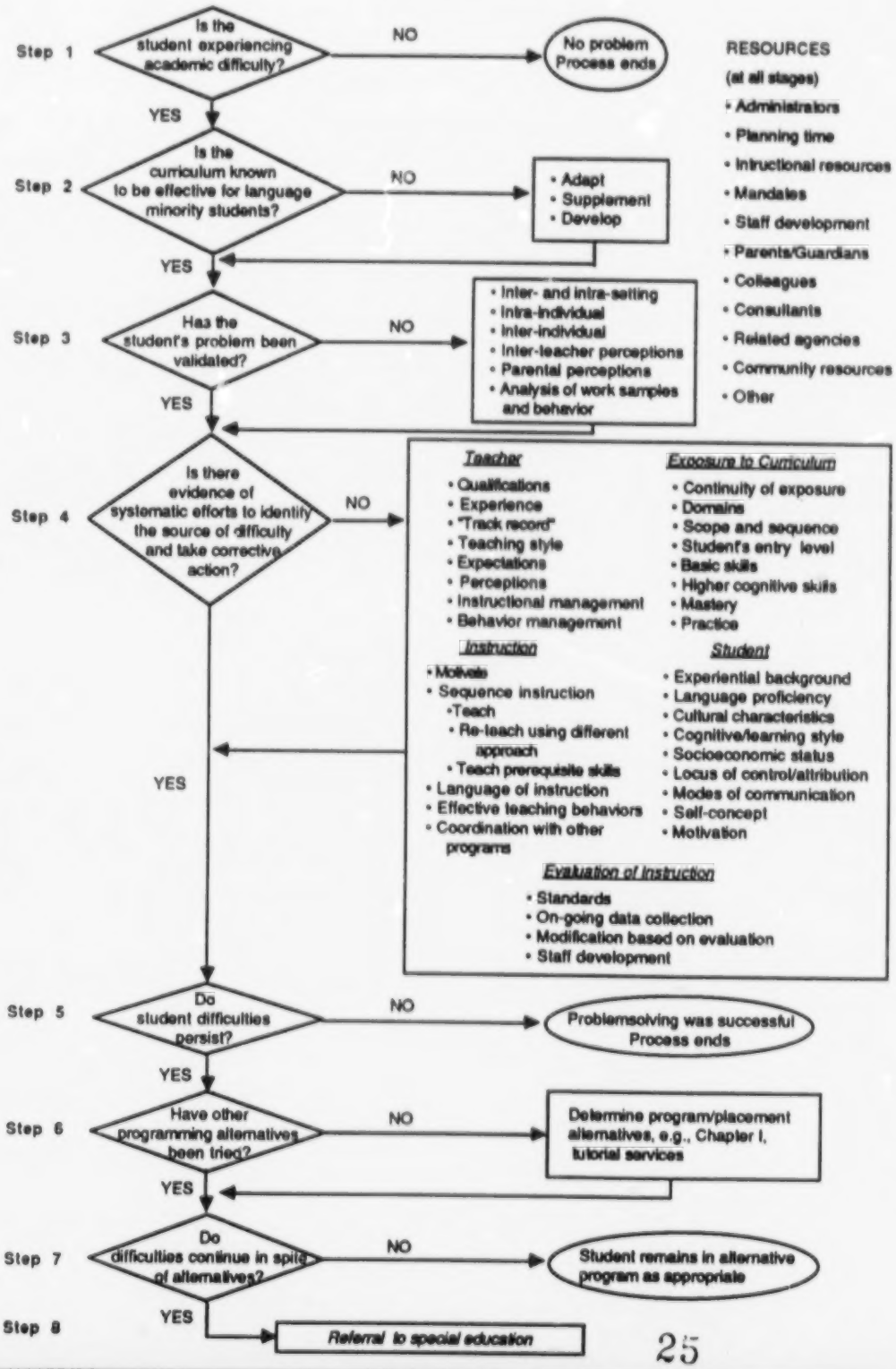
In the following sections, questions to be raised at each step of prereferral intervention are presented and follow-up questions which should be asked at each stage of the process are identified. Though by no means exhaustive, these follow-up questions are intended to represent issues that must be considered to more accurately identify the cause(s) of students' difficulties.

Step 1
Is the student experiencing academic difficulty?

Because of the diversity of student backgrounds and the range of abilities typically found in regular classrooms, it is to be expected that some students will experience academic difficulty. However, it is important for teachers to understand that very few students experience difficulty because of a handicapping condition. National incidence figures indicate that only 10-12% of the student population is handicapped (Kaskowitz, 1977; Ortiz & Yates, 1983). Handicapping conditions include mental retardation, hearing and vision impairments, emotional disturbance, physical and health impairments, deaf-blindness, multiple handicaps, and specific learning disabilities. Linguistic, cultural, socioeconomic and other background differences are not considered handicapping conditions. As a matter of fact, the special education assessment process must clearly document that a student's learning difficulties are not the result of factors such as limited knowledge of English or lack of opportunities to learn. Consequently, prereferral interventions aimed at identifying the sources of the problem

Figure 1

Preventing Inappropriate Placements of Language Minority Students in Special Education: A Prereferral Process



and improving the student's performance in the mainstream should be attempted before referral to special education is considered.

Step 2
Are the curricula and instructional materials known to be effective for language minority students?

A beginning point in addressing the question of whether curricula and/or instructional materials are effective for second language learners is to examine achievement patterns in a district or on an individual campus. Representation of students at the high, middle, and low levels of standardized achievement scores should be proportional with the ethnic composition of the educational unit being studied. If LEP students historically make the lowest achievement scores, or are overrepresented in special education, particularly in the category of learning disabilities, indications are that either the curriculum is ineffective for these students or that it has been poorly implemented. The curricula and instructional materials should be reviewed to determine whether they present both minority and majority perspectives and contributions and to determine whether they are relevant to students' language and culture. If student failure can be attributed to the use of inappropriate curricula or to ineffective instructional materials, then referrals to special education are unwarranted. Efforts, instead, should focus on modifying or creating more effective instructional programs.

Program Development and Adaptation

Special language programs exemplify the program development phase suggested by the prereferral model. The recognition that limited-English-proficient students cannot learn if they do not understand or speak the language of instruction led to the development of bilingual education and English-as-a-second-language programs. Less recognized, perhaps, is that regular classroom teachers must also adapt the curriculum and instruction for language minority students who do not qualify for special language programs and for students who have been exited from bilingual education or ESL. Although these students have good conversational English skills, many do not have the cognitive academic language skills (Cummins, 1984) needed to handle the language used by teachers in instruction and that found in textbooks. Rather than treat these language minority students as though they were native speakers of English, teachers must incorporate language development activities into the curriculum to help students expand and refine their English language skills to a level commensurate with English-speaking peers. Language development programs are also important for students from lower socioeconomic status environments who have intact language skills for the purposes of communication at home and in their community, but because of differences in experiences do not have language skills, even in their primary language, which match the linguistic demands of the bilingual/ESL classroom. Unless these language skills are taught, such students will be predisposed to school failure.

Step 3
Has the problem been validated?

Identification of a student "problem" typically involves a judgment that the behavior is deviant from the norm. In the case of language minority students, the norm or reference group must represent the child's linguistic and cultural community. Several factors must be considered before the conclusion that behavior is abnormal can be validated, including observation and data collection in the following areas (Tucker, 1981):

1. *Inter- and intra-setting comparisons* to measure the extent to which the perceived problem is manifested across different occasions and settings.
2. *Inter-individual comparisons* must also be made to assess whether the perceived problem behaviors differ from those of other students in the class. The cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic and other relevant characteristics of the comparison group must be similar to those of the target student.
3. *Inter-teacher perceptions* to identify any teacher- or setting-specific problems that may exist, as is the case when similar problems fail to be noted by the student's other teachers.
4. *Parental perceptions* to determine whether parents confirm the school's perceptions. In such cases it is more likely that a problem exists.
5. *Analysis of student work samples and behavior* to determine the specific nature of the perceived problem. The problem should be described in precise, measurable terms, rather than using broad, general descriptors such as "below grade level in math," "cannot read well," or "has a short attention span." Work samples and behavioral analyses can also help develop hypotheses about the source of the difficulty. Is the student experiencing difficulty with division because she/he cannot multiply? Does the student fail to meet expectations for classroom behavior because the norms are different from those of his home or community? Work samples are particularly important for students in bilingual education programs in that they serve to verify, or question, results obtained from standardized achievement tests which do not usually include representative samples of ethnic or language minority groups and which do not measure native language skills or achievement.

Step 4
Is there evidence of systematic efforts to identify the source of difficulty and to take corrective action?

Since failure itself is a multi-faceted phenomenon, it is likely that the solution, too, will involve more than one aspect of the child's school experience. Solutions must be approached from various perspectives, to include teacher-, student-, curriculum- and instruction-related factors. Thus, in some instances, corrective actions include professional development and training for teachers; in other cases, the student may have to be taught prerequisite skills; in still other situations, a redirection of curricula and evaluation of instructional programs may be required.

Teacher Characteristics

Teachers may not possess the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to effectively meet the needs of students from diverse cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic backgrounds. When teacher and student characteristics differ along any or all of these dimensions, the potential for conflict and failure increases considerably. According to Gay (1981), such differences are often manifested as conflicts which are *substantive* (e.g., disagreement over educational goals), *procedural* (e.g., mismatch of teaching and learning styles) or *interpersonal* (e.g., culturally relevant behaviors interpreted as behavior "problems"). All three conditions affect teaching effectiveness and a student's ability to profit from instruction. It is, therefore, essential to examine the effectiveness of instruction, including the teacher's qualifications, experience, and teaching history, during the prereferral process. Examples of questions to be asked about teacher-related variables are given in Figure 2.

Teaching Style. Teachers are predisposed to teach in ways that correspond to their own learning styles (Ramirez & Castaneda, 1974). This poses few difficulties for students whose learning styles correspond to the teacher's teaching style, but can be devastating for those whose styles are incompatible with the instructional approaches being used. Teachers can maximize learning by using a variety of techniques when they deliver instruction thus giving *all* students the opportunity to utilize their own modality preferences or cognitive styles. This can be achieved by the use of multi-sensory teaching aids, learning centers where students can learn material in a variety of ways, diversified grouping patterns, variations in reinforcement systems, and so forth. Additionally, students can be **taught** to use alternative learning styles thus increasing their chances of being successful, regardless of task conditions.

Figure 2

Teacher Variables

Experiential Background

- o Does the teacher have the training and experience to work effectively with multicultural populations?
- o What resources has the teacher utilized in attempting to resolve the problem?
  - *district resources (instructional supervisors, inservice training, media and materials)*
  - *volunteers*
  - *community resources*
  - *colleagues*
  - *external consultants*
  - *professional associations*

Culture

- o Has the teacher gathered cultural information specific to the student and his/her family?
  - *native/traditional versus immigrant group*
  - *parent interviews*
  - *student interviews*
  - *home visits*
- o Does the teacher incorporate aspects of the student's culture into the curriculum?
  - *pluralistic goals, perspectives*
  - *integrating information across subject areas versus isolating units or presenting fragmented bits of information around holidays, festivals, etc.*
  - *accurate representation of culture and contributions of the group*

Language Proficiency

- o Are the teacher's language skills adequate to deliver instruction in the student's native language?
- o If the student is not in bilingual education, what resources have been utilized to provide native language support?
- o Is the teacher adequately trained to provide dual language instruction? English-as-a-second-language intervention?
- o Were the student's linguistic characteristics addressed by the teacher in planning instruction?
  - *Comprehensible input is provided.*
  - *Focus of instruction is on meaning rather than error correction.*
  - *There are opportunities for English language acquisition.*

Teaching Style/Learning Style

- o Is the teacher aware of his/her own preferred teaching style?
- o Is the teacher aware of the student's preferred learning style?
- o Does the teacher use a variety of styles to accommodate various learning styles of students? Is the student's style addressed?

Expectations/Perceptions

- o What are the teacher's perceptions of the student?
- o Are expectations and level of instruction geared to higher levels of thinking?
- o How does the teacher view cultural diversity in the classroom?
- o How do these views influence expectations as well as instructional planning?

Teacher Expectations and Perceptions. Teachers sometimes judge students' competence on the basis of race, sex, socioeconomic, linguistic and cultural differences, rather than on actual abilities (Bergen & Smith, 1966; Jackson & Cosca, 1974; Rist, 1970; Ysseldyke, Algozzine, Richey, & Graden, 1982). Research on teacher expectations (Good & Brophy, 1973) further suggests that teachers differentially interact with students for whom they hold low expectations. For example, they wait less time for students to respond, offer fewer opportunities to learn, focus on student behavior and discipline rather than academic work, reinforce inappropriate behaviors, seat low expectation students further away and call on them less frequently. Differential behaviors have also been noted in the treatment of boys and girls. Teachers with traditional sex role stereotypes may do a task for girls but give boys extended directions to complete the activity, interpret girls' silence as ignorance versus interpreting boys' silence as evidence of thought and reflection, and provide girls with less feedback, positive or negative, than boys (Sadker & Sadker, 1982). As the quality of instruction is diminished over time, for specific groups of students this alone could explain differences in achievement levels. Patterns of teacher-pupil interactions should be analyzed to determine whether they facilitate or hinder student performance. Additionally, teachers' expectations should be evaluated to ensure that they are neither too high nor too low, since student frustration and failure can occur under either condition.

Student Characteristics

The complexity of providing appropriate instructional opportunities is immediately apparent when one considers the diversity of characteristics among language minority students. Those characteristics discussed in the following sections (and see Figure 3, page 7) serve only to suggest the range of student variables which must be considered in planning instruction. A comprehensive description of background and experiences is required to make instruction uniquely appropriate to the student. The prereferral process should verify that the teacher has been able to tailor instruction to the needs of the student in question. Examples of teacher ability to accommodate cultural and linguistic diversity are also presented in Figure 2.

Language Proficiency. There is wide diversity in the language characteristics of LEP students: diversity which at one extreme is descriptive of individuals reared in communities where the primary language is Spanish and at the other extreme characteristic of students reared in environments where the primary language is English. Determining the point on the language continuum which is most characteristic of students' first and second language skills is important to choosing the language of instruction (Ortiz, 1984). Language evaluations should produce data which describe the child's interpersonal communication skills and should emphasize analysis of English pragmatic skills, rather than structural accuracy (e.g., correctness of phonology, syntax, grammar). A focus on pragmatic skills is important because LEP students will make numerous errors on the surface forms of English. Teachers may inaccurately conclude that these errors suggest a possible language disability rather than that they verify the student's LEP status.

Critical to distinguishing learning disabilities from linguistic differences is the assessment of a child's academic language proficiency (Cummins, 1984). In addition to evaluating interpersonal communication skills, assessments should also measure the literacy-related aspects of language. Procedures which capture whether a child understands teacher-talk (e.g., tests of dictation or story retelling) and whether she/he can handle the language found in texts (e.g., cloze procedures or comprehension checks which tap evaluation or inferential skills) are recommended. Unless these skills are measured, teachers may attribute low achievement to learning disabilities when they may, in fact, be related to lack of academic language proficiency. Frequently, students at greatest risk of being misdiagnosed as handicapped are those who have received ESL instruction long enough to acquire basic interpersonal communication skills (approximately 1-2 years), but who need more time to develop academic language proficiency (approximately 5-7 years).

Culture. Understanding cultural characteristics is an important aspect of distinguishing differences from handicapping conditions. While some behaviors do not conform to the desired or expected behaviors of the majority society, they may, nonetheless, be normal given a student's ethnic or cultural group. Such behaviors are best characterized as **differences** rather than handicapping conditions. Educators must learn as much as possible about diversity within cultures, and about the contemporary culture of students, so they can create learning environments and curricula which are uniquely compatible with student characteristics, with expectations and desires of parents, and with school and community norms.

Socioeconomic Status. Developmental patterns of children from poverty environments differ from those of middle class students. When children's experiences do not match those expected by teachers and schools, teachers may attribute school problems to "deficient" environments and may lower their expectations for student success (Ortiz & Yates, 1984). Unfortunately, teachers sometimes fail to recognize that economic differences affect cognitive and learning styles,

causing children to respond in different ways to instruction. For example, children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may have difficulty processing information or profiting from instruction presented from a framework of independence and intrinsic motivation, if they fail to perceive their own effort as an important cause of success or failure. These students will not be successful unless they are taught using strategies compatible with their own cognitive orientations and/or until they are taught "learning to learn" strategies (e.g., setting goals, planning for goal attainment, sequencing behavior, and intrinsic motivation).

Figure 3
Student Variables

Experiential Background

- o Are there any factors in the student's school history which may be related to the current difficulty?
  - *attendance/mobility*
  - *opportunities to learn*
  - *program placement(s)*
  - *quality of prior instruction*
- o Are there any variables related to family history which may have affected school performance?
  - *lifestyle*
  - *length of residence in the U.S.*
  - *stress (e.g., poverty, lack of emotional support)*
- o Are there any variables related to the student's medical history which may have affected school performance?
  - *vision*
  - *hearing*
  - *illness*
  - *nutrition*
  - *trauma or injury*

Culture

- o How is the student's cultural background different from the culture of the school and larger society? (Mattes & Omark, 1984; Saville-Troike, 1978)
  - *family (family size and structure, roles, responsibilities, expectations)*
  - *aspirations (success, goals)*
  - *language and communication (rules for adult, adult-child, child-child communication, language use at home, non-verbal communication)*
  - *religion (dietary restrictions, role expectations)*
  - *traditions and history (contact with homeland, reason for immigration)*
  - *decorum and discipline (standards for acceptable behavior)*
- o To what extent are the student's characteristics representative of the larger group?
  - *continuum of culture (traditional, dualistic, atraditional [Ramírez & Castañeda, 1974])*
  - *degree of acculturation or assimilation*
- o Is the student able to function successfully in more than one cultural setting?
- o Is the student's behavior culturally appropriate?

Language Proficiency

- o Which is the student's dominant language? Which is the preferred?
  - *settings (school, playground, home, church, etc.)*
  - *topics (academic subjects, day-to-day interactions)*
  - *speakers (parents, teachers, siblings, peers, etc.)*
  - *aspects of each language (syntax, vocabulary, phonology, use)*
  - *expressive vs. receptive*
- o What is the student's level of proficiency in the primary language and in English? (Cummins, 1984)
  - *interpersonal communication skills*
  - *cognitive/academic literacy-related skills*
- o Are the styles of verbal interaction used in the primary language different from those most valued at school, in English? (Heath, 1986)
  - *label quests (e.g., what's this? who?)*
  - *meaning quests (adult infers for child, interprets or asks for explanation)*
  - *accounts (generated by teller, information new to listener; e.g., show & tell, creative writing)*
  - *eventcasts (running narrative on events as they unfold, or forecast of events in preparation)*
  - *stories*
- o If so, has the student been exposed to those that are unfamiliar to him/her?
- o What is the extent and nature of exposure to each language?
  - *What language(s) do the parents speak to each other?*
  - *What language(s) do the parents speak to the child?*
  - *What language(s) do the children use with each other?*
  - *What television programs are seen in each language?*
  - *Are stories read to the child? In what language(s)?*
- o Are student behaviors characteristic of second language acquistion?
- o What types of language intervention has the student received?
  - *bilingual vs. monolingual instruction*
  - *language development, enrichment, remediation*
  - *additive vs. subtractive bilingualism (transition versus maintenance)*

Learning Style

- o Does the student's learning style require curricular/instructional accommodation?
  - *perceptual style differences (e.g. visual vs. auditory learner)*
  - *cognitive style differences (e.g., inductive vs. deductive thinking)*
  - *preferred style of participation (e.g., teacher vs. student directed, small vs. large group)*
- o If so, were these characteristics accommodated, or were alternative styles taught?

Motivational Influences

- o Is the student's self-concept enhanced by school experiences?
  - *school environment communicates respect for culture and language*
  - *student experiences academic and social success*
- o Is schooling perceived as relevant and necessary for success in the student's family and community?
  - *aspirations*
  - *realistic expectations based on community experience*
  - *culturally different criteria for success*
  - *education perceived by the community as a tool for assimilation*

Exposure to the Curriculum

The central questions to be answered in determining whether children have had sufficient exposure to the curriculum are whether they have been taught the subject or skill and/or whether this instruction has been interrupted. Students experience discontinuity of instruction for a variety of reasons, including having to stay home to take care of younger brothers and sisters in family emergencies, fatigue because they work late hours to help support the family, or simply because they are experiencing so many school-related problems that avoiding school is a way of relieving the pain of failure. These interruptions of schooling negatively affect academic achievement and, if not addressed in a timely fashion, can have cumulative effects devastating to future success. Unless teachers provide ways for under-achieving students to catch up with peers, learning problems which develop are more likely to be associated with the lack of opportunity to learn, rather than with handicapping conditions. Filling in instructional gaps requires that teachers understand skill domains (e.g., that reading requires that children have an adequate language foundation and that they master both word recognition and comprehension skills), so they can assess each child's entry level skills and sequence instruction accordingly. Figure 4 suggests areas which should be explored at this stage.

Figure 4

Exposure to the Curriculum

- o Were skills in question taught?
- o Did student receive adequate exposure to curriculum?
  - *in his/her dominant language*
  - *sufficient practice to achieve mastery*
- o Was instruction sensitive to student's level of performance?
  - *instructional, frustrational, independent levels*
  - *higher level cognitive skills vs. basic skills*
- o Was adequate mastery of skills/concepts ensured prior to moving on to new material?

Higher Cognitive Skills. Cazden (1984) criticizes school effectiveness research because it places too much emphasis on the development of skills which are easily quantifiable (e.g., math activities in which answers can be judged as right or wrong) and virtually ignores instruction involving more complex, abstract concepts and development of critical thinking skills, the outcomes of which are oftentimes difficult to measure. Cummins (1984) concurs, indicating that the predominant instructional model, in regular and special education, is based on task analyses which structure learning in small, sequential steps: students may be able to complete each step but are sometimes unable to reconstruct the whole task because it has been stripped of meaning. Task analysis is antithetical, not only to higher order skill development, but in the case of LEP students, to the acquisition of English as a second language. Cummins recommends, instead, a reciprocal interaction model in which the teacher serves as a facilitator of learning, focuses on higher order cognitive skills, and integrates language use and development into all aspects of curriculum content. Such a model is expected to produce more effective learners and may decrease the need for specialized intervention outside the mainstream. The prereferral process should describe the instructional model being utilized by the teacher to determine whether the approach, in and of itself, is maintaining low functioning levels and reinforcing marginal, semi-dependent behavior (Harth, 1982).

Basic Skills. Because special education referrals are usually concerned with mastery of basic skills, the prereferral process should document the extent and nature of prior instruction in these areas. Of particular interest is the language in which skills were initially taught. It is not uncommon for LEP students to be referred to special education on the basis of low English skills, even though their first schooling experiences were in bilingual education programs in which basic skills were taught in the native language (L1). For these students, a referral would be inappropriate until data such as the following are analyzed: (a) the child's English (L2) and native language proficiency, (b) informal assessment results describing level of basic skills functioning in L1 and L2, (c) information about when the transition to English language instruction occurred, and (d) whether the child was functioning adequately in the native language at the time of the transition. These data can help determine whether the child's problems are pedagogically induced as might be the case, for example, if English language instruction were begun before the child had adequately mastered basic skills in L1, or before she/he had acquired appropriate levels of English language proficiency.

Mastery and Practice. Sufficient time must be allocated for students to achieve subject or skill mastery and for skills practice. Students are sometimes engaged in independent practice activities before they have demonstrated adequate understanding of the task, and thus incorrect patterns or behaviors are reinforced as they work on their own. According to Rosenshine (1983), assuring adequate exposure to the curriculum requires that a child demonstrate mastery at a level of 95 to 100% accuracy. Berliner (1984) suggests that teachers check students' understanding during lesson presentations and that pupils first participate in guided or controlled practice during

which teachers monitor performance to be sure that students are working at high levels of accuracy. Only then should students be involved in independent, unsupervised activities. At the prereferral stages, data are gathered to describe adequacy of lesson presentations and whether the student has had sufficient time to master and practice skills. Evidence that the child received appropriate instruction, but did not profit from it, can later be used to justify a referral for a comprehensive assessment.

Instruction

Before referring a student, teachers should carefully document adaptations of instruction and programs which have been attempted to improve performance in the mainstream. Adelman (1970) suggests that instruction be carefully sequenced as follows: (a) teach basic skills, subjects or concepts; (b) reteach skills or content using significantly different strategies or approaches for the benefit of students who fail to meet expected performance levels after initial instruction; and (c) refocus instruction on the teaching of prerequisite skills for students who continue to experience difficulty even after approaches and materials have been modified. Documentation of this teaching sequence is very helpful if the child fails to make adequate progress and is subsequently referred to special education. Referral committees will be able to judge whether the adaptations attempted were appropriate given the student's background characteristics. It is possible, for example, that a child will fail to learn to read, even after a teacher attempts several different reading approaches, because the child is being instructed in English but is not English proficient. In this case, the interventions would be judged inappropriate and other instructional alternatives would need to be recommended. Ultimately, if the child qualifies for special education services, information about prior instruction is invaluable to the development of individualized educational programs, because the types of interventions which work and those which have met with limited success are already clearly delineated. Figure 5 delineates types of questions to be asked about instruction.

Instruction should be consistent with what is known about language acquisition and about the interrelationship between first and second language development. Some research literature (Cummins, 1984; Krashen, 1982) indicates that the native language may provide the foundation for acquiring English-as-a-second-language skills. Therefore, strong promotion of native language conceptual skills may be more effective in providing a basis for English literacy (Cummins, 1984). Conversely, a premature shift to English-only instruction, may interrupt a natural developmental sequence and may interfere with intellectual and cognitive development. Teachers need to mediate instruction using both the first and the second language and integrate English development with subject matter instruction. Along with this, teachers may consider responding to and using cultural referents during instruction, respecting the values and norms of the home culture even as the norms of the majority culture are being taught (Tikunoff, 1985). Above all, teachers must communicate high expectations for students and a sense of efficacy in terms of their own ability to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Figure 5

Instruction

- o Does the learning environment promote intrinsic motivation?
  - *relevant activities*
  - *incorporation of students' interests*
  - *addressing student needs*
  - *sensitivity to experiential background*
- o Does the teacher use alternative approaches when there is evidence of a learning difficulty?
  - *teach*
  - *reteach using significantly different approaches*
  - *teach prerequisite skills*
- o Does the teacher use strategies that are known to be effective for language minority students?
  - *native language and ESL instruction*
  - *genuine dialogue with students*
  - *contextualized instruction*
  - *collaborative learning*
  - *self-regulated learning*
- o Does the teacher use current approaches to the teaching of ESL?
  - *Total Physical Response Approach (Asher, 1979)*
  - *The Natural Approach (Terrell, 1983)*
  - *Sheltered English Teaching (Northcutt & Watson, 1986)*
- o Does the teacher use approaches to literacy development which focus on meaningful communication?
  - *shared book experiences (Holdaway, 1979)*
  - *Graves' Writing Workshop (Graves, 1983)*
  - *language experience stories*
  - *dialogue journals (Staton, 1987)*
  - *journals*

Evaluation of Instruction

Obviously, any instructional program must involve a continuous monitoring system to determine whether goals and objectives are being met. In the classroom, evaluation is teacher-driven and requires that teachers continuously check student progress through daily quizzes, six-week examinations, or informal observations, for example, and that they provide feedback to students about academic progress. It does not help to return a student's spelling test or math assignment with answers marked wrong but no information as to why responses were incorrect and thus, no indication

as to how performance can be improved. Simply marking answers as right or wrong does not clue the teacher as to how to modify instruction or plan subsequent lessons for students experiencing difficulty. A data-based approach involving simple, informal observation and analysis of student work samples is more effective in increasing student achievement (Zigmond & Miller, 1986). For limited-English-proficient students, data must describe the child's functioning levels in English and the native language.

The discussions in the preceding sections are not exhaustive, but are simply designed to highlight that learning problems occur for a variety of reasons. These reasons include a lack of teacher preparation in the instruction of multicultural populations, failure to provide instruction, instruction that is not consistent with entry level skills or is inappropriately sequenced, and/or the absence of a system for evaluating and modifying instruction as needed. Consequently, there will be instances when intervention will be focused on teachers and programs, rather than on students.

Step 5
Do student difficulties persist?

If, after evidence is provided that systematic efforts were made to identify the source of difficulty and to take corrective action, student difficulties persist, the next step in the process is to explore other programming alternatives within the mainstream.

Step 6
Have other programming alternatives been tried?

If the student's problem cannot be resolved by the bilingual education or ESL teacher, it may be possible for students to be served through compensatory education programs which provide remedial instruction (i.e., Chapter 1, migrant education, or tutorial programs). If such placements are not readily available, referral to special education can become a "trigger" response when teachers are unable to improve students' achievement.

Effective use of compensatory programs as an alternative to referral requires that teachers understand the purpose of these alternative programs and that they be familiar with eligibility criteria for placement (which students are served by which program). Procedures to coordinate consideration for eligibility across such programs should be developed. For example, when tests and other measures used to determine eligibility vary from program to program, data gathered during assessment for one program may not necessarily provide information that would qualify a student for another, more appropriate, service. Such parallel yet separate processes tend to hinder timely services to students who need them, and increase the burden of testing for both assessment personnel and students.

Finally, it is important that alternative programs be supplemental to, rather than a replacement for, regular classroom instruction and that appropriateness of instruction provided by such services is evaluated as carefully as was instruction in the classroom (see Step 4). Unless these issues are addressed, misplacements in special education can continue to occur despite the availability of these options (Garcia, 1984).

Step 7
Do difficulties continue in spite of alternatives?

If mainstream alternatives prove to be of no avail, then a referral to special education is appropriate. The evidence most critical to determining eligibility will accompany the referral, i.e., verification that (a) the school's curriculum is appropriate; (b) the child's problems are documented across settings and personnel, not only in school, but also at home; (c) difficulties are present both in the native language and in English; (d) the child has been taught but has not made satisfactory progress; (e) the teacher has the qualifications and experience to effectively teach the student; and (f) instruction has been continuous, appropriately sequenced, and has included teaching of skills prerequisite to success. A child who does not learn after this type of systematic, quality intervention is a likely candidate for special education. The referral indicates that a decision has been reached that the child cannot be served by regular education programs alone and that she/he may be handicapped. A comprehensive assessment is requested to determine the nature of the handicapping condition.

While at first glance the model may seem overwhelming, several factors should be kept in mind. First of all, the model suggests the characteristics of effective instruction and thus can be used proactively to develop classroom environments conducive to student success. Moreover, it pinpoints variables which influence student performance, making it easier for teachers to diagnose causes of problems and to attempt solutions. When interventions attempted by teachers fail to yield improved performance, Teacher Assistance Teams provide a relatively simple and cost-effective vehicle for providing additional support to regular classroom teachers in the problem-solving process.

SUMMARY

Prereferral intervention should be a formal process, governed by a clearly recognizable set of procedures, accepted and followed by all personnel on a district or campus-wide basis, and located under the jurisdiction of regular education. There are major benefits to be gained from the successful implementation of such a process. Serving students in the mainstream is more cost effective than placement in special education, particularly if the student is underachieving, but not handicapped. More importantly, perhaps, are the long-term benefits for students themselves who will have a greater chance of achieving their social, political, and economic potential because they are provided an appropriate education. Unless dropout rates among LEP students are decreased and academic achievement of these students is improved, the loss of earning power, and the concomitant drain on society's resources, will continue to be astronomical. Development of prereferral interventions, in which the major goal is to improve the effectiveness of regular education for language minority students, seems a very cost-effective investment in the future.

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BILINGUAL SPECIAL EDUCATION

Leonard M. Baca and Hermes T. Cervantes

How Many Students Are Both Disabled and Bilingual?

Based on 1980 Census and Immigration and Naturalization Services records, it is estimated that there are 79 million school-age language minority children in the United States. This bilingual population is distributed throughout the United States with heavier concentrations in the southwest and northeast. The highest concentration is in the large urban areas.

Considering the overall population with limited English proficiency (LEP) in the United States, a critical question for bilingual special educators is how many of these students also have disabilities. According to the U.S. Office of Special Education, an estimated 948,000 children may both be linguistically different and have disabilities—a substantial population who could benefit from bilingual special education services.

Although overrepresentation is an issue in some school districts, a new problem of underrepresentation has also emerged in some areas (Ovando & Collier, 1985) because many LEP students with disabilities are being placed in bilingual education as an alternative to special education (Baca & Cervantes, 1989).

How Can Special Education and Bilingual Education Be Combined?

Developers of bilingual special education programs need to weigh three factors for each student: degree of disability; level of language proficiency in both English and the primary language; and intellectual capacity. The student's placement on each of these three continuums will determine the nature of instruction and the educational placement.

Students' degree of disability must be considered for program design, along with their intellectual capacities and their proficiencies in English and their other languages (Baca & Payon, 1989). For example, a student of average intelligence who has a high level of language proficiency in Spanish, a minimal level of ability in English, and limited visual acuity will require curricular services and placement different from those of a student who is linguistically limited in both languages, exhibits lower intellectual performance, and is severely language delayed.

What Variables Should Influence Placement Decisions?

Program placement should be the best fit between the student's needs and the available resources. Placement decisions for the bilingual exceptional student should reflect the type and nature of instruction to be provided, the language of instruction, the conveyor of instruction, the duration of instruction, and the student's learning needs and style. The following special education variables and bilingual factors should be addressed in identifying placements (Baca & Payon, 1989, p. 96):

- Student's age.
- Type and degree of impairment or disability.
- Age at which disability occurred.
- Level of language involvement because of the disability.
- Level of academic achievement.
- Entry level language skills (upon entering school).
- Measured intellectual ability.
- Method and language used in measuring academic achievement and intellectual ability.
- Level of adaptive behavior.
- Time spent in United States.
- Current cultural home setting.
- Social maturity.
- Level of language proficiency in English and other language.
- Amount and type of language input received in the home environment.
- Speech and language capabilities in both languages.
- Presence of multiple handicaps.
- Ambulation or mobility.
- Success in past and present placements.
- Wishes of students and parents.

What Is Needed to Get Started?

Operationalizing bilingual special education requires the creation of an instructional social system that involves active teaching of cognitive skills and includes the development of language skills while focusing on the acquisition of English. All instruction is prescribed in a manner that accommodates and remediates the student's exceptionality. Students must understand the directions and the nature of the tasks. Instruction must be provided within a relevant cultural context so that expectations can be understood by the student. Because language is the primary conveyor of instruction, the student's stronger language must be employed.

Based on the assumption that students learn best in their preferred language, bilingual special education is operationalized at each local level with each individual student in mind. The common thread is to provide for all students educational experiences that develop lifelong learning skills (Baca & Payon, 1989).

What Are the Basic Elements of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for These Children?

IEPs for exceptional bilingual students should include the following elements:

1. The child's current educational status, including all service programs the child is receiving.

2. Goals, including adaptation to acculturation and growth in both the first and second language. The goals must be realistic in regard to the time necessary; years could be involved.

3. The sequence of short-term instructional objectives leading up to each goal.

4. A list of instructional and service requirements, including a balance between the first and second language, as well as delineation of who will assist with acculturation needs.

5. An indication of how much and what aspects of the program will be in the mainstream.

6. The program's duration.

7. Realistic criteria and a schedule for evaluation of the IEP's effectiveness.

8. A statement of the role of the parents.

9. Specification of changes to be made in the physical, social, and instructional realms, including the first and second languages and cross-cultural adaptation. (Collier, 1989, pp. 272–273)

What Are the Steps in Developing a Comprehensive Curriculum ?

The four major partners in bilingual special education curriculum development are the parents, the mainstream teacher, the bilingual teacher, and the special education teacher. The following steps should be undertaken by this team:

1. Meet as a team to begin the planning process. Outline planning steps.

2. Become familiar with the culture and language background of the child.

3. Become familiar with the special learning style and education needs of the child.

4. Prepare an individual instructional plan with short- and long-term goals (in some cases this may be an IEP).

5. Develop individualized lessons and materials appropriate to the child's exceptionality.

6. Modify individualized lessons and materials using a "cultural screen" and sensitivity.

7. Refer to resource people for assistance and cooperation in instruction; coordinate services.

8. Evaluate the child's ongoing progress and develop a new individual plan (IEP), materials, and so forth, as needed.

9. Start the cycle over. (Collier & Kalk, 1989, p. 207)

What Should Be Considered in Selecting Materials for Bilingual Exceptional Children?

The following guidelines represent some of the many considerations teachers should bear in mind when evaluating, selecting, adapting, or developing materials:

1. Know the specific language abilities of each student.

2. Include appropriate cultural experiences in material adapted or developed.

3. Ensure that material progresses at a rate commensurate with student needs and abilities.

4. Document the success of selected materials.

5. Adapt only specific materials requiring modifications, and do not attempt to change too much at one time.

6. Try out different materials and adaptations until an appropriate education for each student is achieved.

7. Strategically implement materials adaptations to ensure smooth transitions into the new materials.

8. Follow some consistent format or guide when evaluating materials.

9. Be knowledgeable about particular cultures and heritages and their compatibility with selected materials.

10. Follow a well-developed process for evaluating the success of adapted or developed materials as the individual language and cultural needs of students are addressed. (Hoover & Collier, 1989, p. 253)

How Can Materials Be Adapted?

Several guidelines for adapting commercial materials or developing teacher-made materials are discussed in the literature (Harris & Schultz, 1986; Lewis & Doorlag, 1987; Mandell & Gold, 1984). The following list is not designed to be all inclusive; variations may be required in order to meet individual needs.

- Adjust the method of presentation or content.
- Develop supplemental material.
- Tape-record directions for the material.
- Provide alternatives for responding to questions.
- Rewrite brief sections to lower the reading level.
- Outline the material for the student before reading a selection.
- Reduce the number of pages or items on a page to be completed by the student.
- Break tasks into smaller subtasks.
- Provide additional practice to ensure mastery.
- Substitute a similar, less complex task for a particular assignment.
- Develop simple study guides to complement required materials. (Hoover & Collier, 1989, p. 253)

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8

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EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION FOR LANGUAGE MINORITY CHILDREN WITH MILD DISABILITIES

Nadine T. Ruiz

This digest describes the Optimal Learning Environment (OLE) Curriculum—a Resource for Teachers of Spanish Speaking Children in Learning Handicapped Programs, a model curriculum for children from language minority groups. This curriculum was developed to suggest ways of teaching language arts to such students and to suggest specific classroom activities that are compatible with the research on effective instruction. This bilingual special education class model looks for the upper range of the bilingual child's academic, linguistic, and social skills (Ruiz, 1988). The following principles govern the OLE curriculum:

Take into account the student's sociocultural background and its effect on oral language, reading and writing, and second language learning.

The following four areas have been identified as important to children from language minority groups: oral language uses, knowledge about print, background knowledge, and sense of story (Anderson & Gipe, 1983; Barnitz, 1986; Hudelson, 1984, 1987; Steffensen & Calken, 1982).

Oral Language Uses. Some children arrive at school already familiar with the use of language in a decontextualized manner, that is, dissociated from shared experience and dependent on precise linguistic formulations (Cummins, 1981; Olson & Nickerson, 1978; Wells, 1981). For example, they may come from homes where books were introduced and discussed at an early age; their parents may have modeled, scaffolded, and elicited their narratives about real and fictional events. Children from families with few outside links, however, may not have sufficient experience with specific, precise, topic-centered language to function effectively in a typical language arts curriculum (Au & Jordon, 1981). Educators should not categorize these children as having language disabilities; rather, they should recognize that a sociocultural factor has influenced the children's verbal performance and has pinpointed the area that must be addressed by oral language instruction in the classroom.

Knowledge About Print. Another area of sociocultural influence is the knowledge about print that children bring to school literacy tasks. Children begin learning to read and write before they start school and begin to learn letter-sound correspondences. Very early on, they may learn why Dad writes a list before he does the grocery shopping (functions of print); where Mama looks to start to read the storybook (book conventions); and how to read "McDonald's" or "K mart" from commercial signs (environmental print). Research has shown that knowledge in these and similar areas related to print is a precursor to conventional reading.

Background Knowledge. A third aspect of literacy instruction that is directly influenced by sociocultural differences is background knowledge. Studies with second language learners show that when they read texts congruent with their background knowledge (for example, when Indian students read about a wedding in India rather than a wedding in the United States), they read it faster, recall both the gist and the details better, and summarize or retell it better (Barnitz, 1986; Steffensen, Joag-dev, & Anderson, 1979). Another study shows that second language learners with limited English proficiency can do as well as more proficient students on reading comprehension tasks when they do prereading activities that activate and extend the background knowledge pertinent to the tasks.

Sense of Story. The final sociocultural influence on reading and writing involves the development of a sense of story or narrative schema, that is, an internal sense of the usual components of a story: setting, main character(s), problem, attempts to resolve the problem, character reactions to the attempts, and resolution (Stein & Nezworski, 1978). An optimal learning environment would have children reading (and listening to) a variety of well-formed stories.

Take into account the student's learning handicaps and how they may affect oral language, reading, writing, and second language learning.

In an OLE classroom, the teacher would not stop with involving the children in prereading activities to access and develop their background knowledge. The teacher would explain the importance of knowing as much as possible about a text before reading it; demonstrate a strategy such as the survey text method (Aukerman, 1972), which students can use to prepare themselves before they read a text; and provide opportunities for the students to practice the strategy.

Follow developmental processes in literacy acquisition.

The OLE Curriculum Guide calls for language arts instruction that acknowledges the importance of developmental phases of literacy acquisition in a number of ways. First, teachers should give students the time they need to develop their knowledge about reading and writing in highly interactive literacy events. Second, student errors in their reading and writing attempts should not automatically be viewed as "bad habits" (Flores, Rueda, & Porter, 1986). Instead, teachers should examine the errors for evidence of what children *can* do, as evidence of their progress through developmental phases. Finally, teachers should realize that a curriculum that does not provide the rich language and literacy environment

described here is an impoverished curriculum that will promote impoverished learners.

Locate curriculum in a meaningful context where the communicative purpose is clear and authentic.

One important way to encourage "meaning making" among children is to engage them in reading and writing whole texts instead of text fragments removed from context (Altwerger, Edelsky, & Flores, 1987). The OLE Curriculum Guide recommends that, in reading lessons, students be encouraged to interact with whole books, poems, and other forms of written language as a way to facilitate meaning making. For writing, teachers should use the Writing Workshop approach described by Atwell (1987). Here, students have control over intentions, topic, and audience as they write and publish their own books. Classmates should meet frequently for peer conferences on their pieces, simultaneously stimulating their need to be clear and interesting writers and providing alternative oral language opportunities.

Connect curriculum with the students' personal experiences.

Many students show greater progress or increased investment when reading and writing tasks give them the opportunity to interject their personal experiences (Au & Jordan, 1981; Flores et al., 1986; Willig & Swedo, 1987). The OLE Curriculum Guide gives specific suggestions on how to connect students' personal topics to the language arts curriculum by using the Writing Workshop and the ETR method, for example.

Incorporate children's literature into reading, writing, and ESL lessons.

Using actual examples of literature can extend students' knowledge about print (including the more sophisticated aspects of this knowledge, such as text structure or style), increase areas of their background knowledge, and facilitate the construction of meaning through whole texts. Literature, even more than expository writing, is decontextualized; that is, its clues to meaning are more implicit than explicit. Second language learners working through literary works must negotiate the meaning, not only between themselves and the text, but also with others. These negotiating moves (e.g., checks for understanding, requests for clarification) have been linked to better English-language gains.

Involve parents as active partners in the instruction of their children.

The OLE Curriculum Guide details various ways to promote equitable parent-school partnerships. One is Project TOT (Training of Trainers), in which parents from language minority groups who are knowledgeable about the inner workings of schools join with families who do not use the available special education services. The families participate in small-group seminars to acquire information and skills related to obtaining those services, as well as forming ongoing support groups.

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9

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FUNCTIONAL LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION FOR LINGUISTICALLY DIFFERENT STUDENTS WITH MODERATE TO SEVERE DISABILITIES

Elva Durán

This digest explains how functional language instruction can be made useful for persons with moderate to severe disabilities who are also culturally and linguistically different. It further explains how vocabulary and cultural information of the Spanish-speaking student can be included in functional language instruction for students who are from different cultural groups.

What Is Functional Language Instruction?

In functional language instruction, the student is taught material that he or she can use in everyday life. In order for the material to be functional it must be useful to the student in many different environments (Brown et al., 1984). Thus, the words students learn at school must be useful at home and in other settings. One way to discover useful words is by using an ecological inventory.

Using an Ecological Inventory to Determine Language Needs

Brown and colleagues (1984) noted that an ecological inventory can determine the words children need to know for more effective functioning at home, at school, and in the community. An ecological inventory is a detailed listing by parents or caregivers of activities the student enjoys participating in. The ecological inventory will reveal the vocabulary that the teacher and parents should include in instructional activities. By getting information regularly from the home environment, the teacher can better decide what to emphasize in the classroom. Too often parents are left out of the student's instruction because teachers and other caregivers do not take the time to ask them what they feel their children need to learn.

The ecological inventory should include a section that seeks information about important cultural events that the family enjoys together. Often children who come to school from culturally and linguistically different families do not participate as fully as they might because the families have not been encouraged to explain what matters to them and their children culturally. Parents can be asked to share traditional legends, stories, and songs that are enjoyed by their children. These materials can then be incorporated into the language instruction program. In addition, parents may be invited to come to school to share in a wide variety of cultural events.

A Classroom Example

Songs can provide functional language activities for students in a variety of settings. If students have some verbal skills, they can sing some of the words or phrases from songs. If they are nonverbal, they can participate by pointing to photographs or pictures of some of the key words as they listen to other children sing. Students can also be helped to follow what is being said by learning to "sign" the important concepts or vocabulary from stories and songs. Another example might be a class discussion of holidays in which each child brings a item pertaining to a personally important holiday or event. A section of the room might be set aside for a holiday "museum," with each item labeled in English and the home language.

It is important to share what is being done in the classroom with parents so that they can carry over the activities at home. If this is not done, students will not learn to generalize information from one setting to another and language acquisition will be slower. Generalization training in language instruction is crucial if information taught in one environment is to be used functionally (Sailor & Guess, 1983).

Choosing Vocabulary for Functional Language Instruction

When determining what particular vocabulary should be taught to students who are from culturally or linguistically different groups, it is important to ask parents and other caregivers what words the student needs to know. Vocabulary related to particular foods, celebrations, or other culturally unique events are particularly good choices. The ecological inventory can be used to list appropriate vocabulary to incorporate into individualized language instruction programs. For example, in many Hispanic homes the student may eat "tortillas," "fajitas," and "enchiladas." These vocabulary words can be added to a list containing English words for other familiar foods such as chicken and bananas. Matching vocabulary to actual foods or pictures of food can be an effective way of helping children learn words that are familiar to their experience. Cueing can be done in both English and the home language. It is most effective to use both languages with students whose home language is different from the primary language of instruction used at school (Duran & Heiry, 1986).

Continuing Parent-School Communication

It is desirable to ask parents for additional vocabulary to add to the language program periodically. Regularly scheduled parent conferences provide ideal occasions for gathering this input. It is important to add new vocabulary that is timely and relevant to the student's day-to-day activities.

Effectiveness of Functional Language Instruction

Children who receive functional and context-embedded language instruction are more likely to have a positive attitude about learning and a heightened self-concept. There is a positive correlation between self-concept and academic achievement (Gay, 1966; Lumpkin, 1959). Furthermore, by using elements of students' cultures to teach language, practitioners assist students in valuing and preserving their family heritage.

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10

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EMPOWERING CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS WITH LEARNING PROBLEMS

Jim Cummins

A positive attitude and a positive self-concept are necessary ingredients for achieving maximum learning potential. A program that accepts and respects the language and culture of its students empowers them to feel confident enough to risk getting involved in the learning process, which includes making mistakes. This digest describes ways in which professionals who work with culturally and linguistically diverse students with disabilities can create such an educational climate.

Incorporate minority students' language and culture into the school program.

The extent to which their language and culture are incorporated into the school program is significantly related to students' academic success (Campos & Keatinge, 1988; Cummins, 1984, 1989; Willig, 1985). In programs in which minority students' first-language skills are strongly reinforced, the students tend to be more successful. Students' English skills do not suffer as a result of less English instruction because there is considerable transfer of cognitive and academic skills across languages. Thus, students who have learned to read in Spanish in a bilingual program do not have to learn to read all over again when instruction begins in English (Ada, 1988). Educators who see their role as adding a second language and cultural affiliation to students' repertoires are likely to empower them more than those who see their role as replacing or subtracting students' primary language and culture in the process of fostering their assimilation into the dominant culture.

The following is a list of ways schools can create a climate that is welcoming to minority families and, at the same time, promotes childrens' pride in their linguistic talents (New Zealand Department of Education, 1988, p. 14):

- Reflect the various cultural groups in the school district by providing signs in the main office and elsewhere that welcome people in the different languages of the community.
- Encourage students to use their first language around the school.
- Provide opportunities for students from the same ethnic group to communicate with one another in their first language where possible (e.g., in cooperative learning groups on at least some occasions).
- Recruit people who can tutor students in their first language.
- Provide books written in the various languages in classrooms and the school library.
- Incorporate greetings and information in the various languages in newsletters and other official school communications.
- Provide bilingual and/or multilingual signs.
- Display pictures and objects of the various cultures represented at the school.
- Create units of work that incorporate other languages in addition to the school language.
- Encourage students to write contributions in their first language for school newspapers and magazines.
- Provide opportunities for students to study their first language in elective subjects and/or in extracurricular clubs.
- Encourage parents to help in the classroom, library, playground, and in clubs.
- Invite students to use their first language during assemblies, prizegivings, and other official functions.
- Invite people from minority groups to act as resource people and to speak to students in both formal and informal settings.

Encourage minority community participation as an integral component of children's education.

When educators involve parents from minority groups as partners in their children's education, the parents appear to develop a sense of efficacy that communicates itself to their children and has positive academic consequences. Most parents of children from minority groups have high academic aspirations for their children and want to be involved in promoting their academic progress (Wong Fillmore, 1983). However, they often do not know how to help their children academically, and they are excluded from participation by the school. Dramatic changes in children's school progress can be realized when educators take the initiative to change this exclusionary pattern to one of collaboration. A collaborative orientation may require a willingness on the part of the teacher to work closely with teachers or aides proficient in the mother tongue in order to communicate effectively and in a noncondescending way with parents from minority groups (Ada, 1988).

Allow students to become active generators of their own knowledge.

There are two major orientations in pedagogy: the transmission model and the interactive/experiential model. These differ in the extent to which the teacher retains exclusive control over classroom interaction as opposed to sharing some of this control with students. The basic premise of the transmission model is that the teacher's task is to impart knowledge or skills to students who do not yet have these skills. This implies that the teacher initiates and controls the interaction, constantly orienting it toward the achievement of instructional objectives.

A central tenet of the interactive/experiential model is that "talking and writing are means to learning" (Bullock Report, 1975, p. 50). Its major characteristics, as compared to a transmission model, are as follows:

- Genuine dialogue between student and teacher in both oral and written modalities.
- Guidance and facilitation rather than control of student learning by the teacher.
- Encouragement of student-student talk in a collaborative learning context.
- Encouragement of meaningful language use by students rather than correctness of surface forms.
- Conscious integration of language use and development with all curricular content rather than teaching language and other content as isolated subjects.
- A focus on developing higher level cognitive skills rather than factual recall.
- Task presentation that generates intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation.
- Student involvement in curriculum planning, teaching students to understand learning styles.

In short, pedagogical approaches that empower students encourage them to assume greater control over setting their own learning goals and collaborate actively with each other in achieving these goals. The instruction is automatically "culture-fair" in that all students are actively involved in expressing, sharing, and amplifying their experiences within the classroom. Recent research on effective teaching strategies for bilingual students with disabilities supports the adoption of interactive/experiential models of pedagogy (Swedo, 1987; Willig, Swedo, & Ortiz, 1987).

Use an advocacy orientation in the assessment process.

Recent studies suggest that despite the appearance of change brought about by legislation such as Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, psychologists continue to test children until they "find" the disability that could be invoked to "explain" the student's apparent academic difficulties (Mehan, Hertweck, & Meihls, 1986). What is required to reverse the so-called legitimizing function of assessment can be termed an *advocacy* orientation. To challenge the labeling of students from minority groups as disabled, assessment must focus on (a) the extent to which children's language and culture are incorporated into the school program, (b) the extent to which educators collaborate with parents in a shared enterprise, and (c) the extent to which children are encouraged to use both their first and second languages actively in the classroom to amplify their experiences in interaction with other children and adults. It is essential that assessment go beyond psychoeducational considerations and take into account the child's entire learning environment.

In summary, an advocacy approach to assessment of children from minority groups involves identifying the pathology that exists in the power relations between dominant and dominated groups in society, in the reflection of these power relations in the interactions of schools and communities, and in the mental and cultural disabling of students from minority groups that takes place in classrooms.

The major goal of the intervention model discussed here is to *prevent* academic casualties among students from minority groups. The principles of empowerment pedagogy are equally applicable to all programs for students from minority groups, regardless of whether they are designated bilingual education, bilingual special education, or some other form of program. In fact, students from minority groups who are experiencing learning difficulties and have been referred for special education have a particular need for empowerment pedagogy and can benefit considerably from such approaches (Swedo, 1987).

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ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE ON LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS 11

ERIC Digest

ESL in Special Education

Prepared by Nancy Cloud

December 1988

The presence of limited-English-proficient (LEP) students in special education settings has raised a number of questions about the special needs of these students and about effective ways to meet these needs. Just as special education students require specialized instructional programming to account for identified disabilities, mainstream LEP students require tailored educational services that account for their second language status. It is, therefore, reasonable to posit that exceptional LEP students require highly specialized programs formulated on a well-articulated, integrated knowledge base from special education and bilingual/ESL education.

Specific Needs of Special Education Students

Special Education is instruction designed for students who require some degree of modification in their educational programs because of intellectual, emotional, sensory, or physical impairments (Glass, Christiansen and Christiansen, 1982). Modifications may include special curricular materials, specialized teaching strategies or behavior management techniques, and specially-designed equipment or facilities. Students with mild disabilities can succeed with modifications in mainstream classrooms. Other students whose disabilities range from moderate to severe in nature require placement in special settings. All special students, regardless of the type or degree of disability, share certain rights and needs, including:

(1) the right to a free and *appropriate* public education;

(2) the right to an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) specifying the student's unique needs and the special education and related services the student is to receive;

(3) the need to have cognitive, linguistic, academic, and social/emotional characteristics considered and appropriate environmental modifications or adaptations made.

Effective IEPs for exceptional LEP students would account for all of the student's basic educational needs, including the need for English-as-a-second-language (ESL) instruction. LEP students enrolled in special education require what is most appropriately labeled Special Education-ESL (SE-ESL) which indicates that the services to be provided account for both a particular student's disability needs and the student's second language status.

Whether SE-ESL services are provided by an ESL specialist or by a special educator, the service provider must draw from both fields to bring coordinated services to the student.

Degree of Disability and Its Effect on Programming

The distinction between students with *mild* disabilities and those with *moderate* to *severe* disabilities directs both the program focus and the need for specialized knowledge to deliver appropriate instruction and to modify the instructional environment.

Mildly Disabled. SE-ESL programs for mildly handicapped students parellel mainstream ESL programs and focus on both oral language development and literacy development in English. The instructor modifies instruction to account for the student's disability by employing specialized teaching strategies, by applying positive reinforcement and behavior management techniques, by providing more practice, or by attending to self-concept concerns.

Moderately or Severely Disabled. SE-ESL programs for moderately or severely handicapped students may be developmental for younger students, in an attempt to establish basic or self-help communication skills in the second language (requesting assistance, giving personal information, interacting with friends). For older students, these programs may have a life-skill focus concentrating on the functional communication skills needed by the individual at home, in the workplace, and in the community (e.g., shopping, using public transportation, getting along with neighbors). An example of such a daily living skills ESL program is *Day By Day in English: An ESL-SEDAC Daily Living Skills Resource Activities Guide* (Division of Special Education, New York City Board of Education, 1984).

While the need for knowledge of specialized teaching techniques, adaptive equipment, or prostheses exists for both groups of SE-ESL students, the need for such knowledge increases incrementally with the degree of disability.

Designing Responsive SE-ESL Programs

Spolsky (1988) provides an excellent discussion of the theoretical considerations in planning a second language program for all types of LEP students, including students with disabilities. A responsive SE-ESL program will take into account both the learner attributes critical to second language learning (aptitude, attitude/motivation, personality, learning style, and learning strategies) (Oxford-Carpenter, 1986) and those to be considered in designing any special education program (cognition, motivation, strategic behavior, learning style preferences, etc.). Essential learner attributes to consider in designing an SE-ESL program include:

- the learner's disability(ies);
- the learner's current stage of second language acquisition (both oral and literacy levels); and
- the particular skills of the learner by area (strengths and weaknesses in listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

Other factors to consider to enhance program success include:

- the learner's age, personality, and interests;
- the learner's communication needs in the second language;
- the degree to which the learner is integrated into the target language community; and
- language learning style.

In general, the more factors accounted for and responded to in planning second language instruction, the more successful the SE-ESL program will be for a particular individual (Oxford-Carpenter, 1986; Spolsky, 1988).

Future Challenges

Preventing Inappropriate Referral to Special Education. Concern about the current overreferral of LEP students to special education (National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1988) has prompted a focus on prereferral strategies that can prevent such a problem (Benavides, 1987; Ortiz and Maldonado-Colon, 1986). LEP students, because of their cultural and linguistic background, have special instructional needs. These needs should not be confused with disability, nor should they serve as a basis for referral to a special education program (Ortiz & Maldonado-Colon, 1986). If a teacher refers a LEP student to the special education program, the LEP student should undergo psychological testing conducted by qualified bilingual/bicultural evaluators familiar with the influence of second language status on the assessment process (Nuttal, Landurand & Goldman, 1984).

More flexible mainstream ESL programs that adequately meet the needs of special populations of LEP children present in U.S. schools today (e.g., preliterate students, underschooled students, highly mobile students, and refugee students) will result in fewer inappropriate referrals to special education.

Training Special Educators and ESL Educators. Special educators and ESL educators need cross-over training to deliver integrated services that account for children's second language and disability characteristics. Currently, a paucity of TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) programs provide cross-over training in special education, and few special education programs encourage specializations in TESOL. Professionals are left to find their own training opportunities at conferences and workshops and from these haphazard events to piece together the elements that formulate appropriate practice. Responsive Special Education/TESOL teacher training programs would create a well-formulated and comprehensive sequence of new course offerings that would cover both the theoretical and practical issues in serving LEP students with disabilities.

Developing Materials. ESL materials must be developed for both mildly and moderately/severely handicapped students. Some efforts have been made by individual practitioners and school districts (Division of Special Education, New York City Board of Education, 1985; Duran, 1985; Fairfax County Schools, 1986), but commercial publishers have been remiss in addressing this special need. Diverse materials must be developed, teaching approaches and instructional activities recommended, and feedback and reinforcement programs suggested. Materials for oral language development and literacy development are needed as well as materials that focus on the needs of the LEP hearing impaired, visually impaired, learning disabled, mentally retarded, and emotionally disturbed child. Trained personnel and appropriate materials are essential to unlocking the potential of exceptional children for whom English is a second language, and to insuring their fullest participation in society. Such participation is the child's civil right, but cannot become a reality without effective educational supports. Only the combined talents of ESL and special educators currently charged with serving these special children will attain this goal.

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12

MAY 1991

HOW DISABILITY CAN AFFECT LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Patricia Medeiros Landurand and Nancy Cloud

Disability Effect on the Language Acquisition Process

Most of the literature on the second language acquisition process ignores the effects of any disability or exceptionality the learner may exhibit on the second language acquisition process.

This brief review is to remind special educators that knowledge of each disability must be integrated into our thinking regarding the second language acquisition process for learners with identified disabilities.

If students have sensorial deficits, this will directly affect their ability to obtain the required, undistorted input for acquisition.

If students are cognitively limited or have memory limitation, their ability to construct and retain essential connections between conceptual and linguistic representations will be impaired.

Students with speech and language difficulties in their first language will exhibit similar difficulties in the second language. The inability to process or construct meaning through language would severely impede the second language acquisition process.

Students with behavior disorders may find it hard to engage in second language acquisition activities or function effectively in second language environments long enough to get sufficient input. Their isolation in or rejection of the linguistic environment would impede their development in the target language.

Likewise, students with neurological or motor disorders may not have the necessary control to coordinate the production of the target language.

Each disability will have to be fully analyzed to understand how it is posing a potential barrier to acquisition and what can be done to remove it instructionally in order to ensure that acquisition can occur.

Climate for Acquisition

Steven Krashen (1982) speaks of the conditions necessary for successful acquisition to occur. These include

1. *Self-esteem*, whereby learners feel they are competent to undertake the learning process and all the risks to their self-confidence inherent in that undertaking.
2. *Motivation*, whereby learners feel positive toward the second language and its speakers and see advantages for them in acquiring the language.
3. *Low anxiety*, whereby learners lose their self-consciousness at their beginning production; are "off the defensive"; and concentrate on the interactions so much they "forget" they are acquiring the new language.
4. *Meaningful input*, whereby the focus is on the message and the content is important, interesting, and relevant to the learners' needs.
5. *Opportunity for learning*, whereby the learner is integrated into the second language environment, can use the target language, and has access to second language models and appropriate instruction.

Surface Proficiency Versus Deep Structure

Recent educators have become aware of the importance of distinguishing among two types of language proficiency acquired by second language learners in their new school environment.

One type of proficiency is *surface proficiency*. This is a functional, contextually based proficiency that allows the speaker to interact with others on personal or everyday topics. Jim Cummins (1981) refers to this communicative proficiency as Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS). Learners usually acquire this proficiency at age-appropriate levels in about 2 years, often sooner.

A second type of proficiency takes much longer to acquire and is referred to as *deep structure*. This type of proficiency is related to cognitively demanding or academic language; in plain terms, the language of teachers, textbooks, and tests. Cummins (1981) refers to this as Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) and suggests that unless students have fully developed academic proficiencies in their native language, which supports more rapid development in the second language of this type of proficiency, that we should expect average children to take from 5 to 7 years to acquire this type of proficiency fully.

Cummins cautions that mistakes in the educational treatment of CLD children can be made if we assume that students are fully proficient when we see the communicative level of proficiency developed and then attribute poor performance in handling lectures, textbooks, and tests to "underlying learning problems" rather than to a continuing lack of proficiency in academic English.

Therefore, it is extremely important to recognize that different levels of proficiency will require different types of support and time frames for acquisition to be complete.

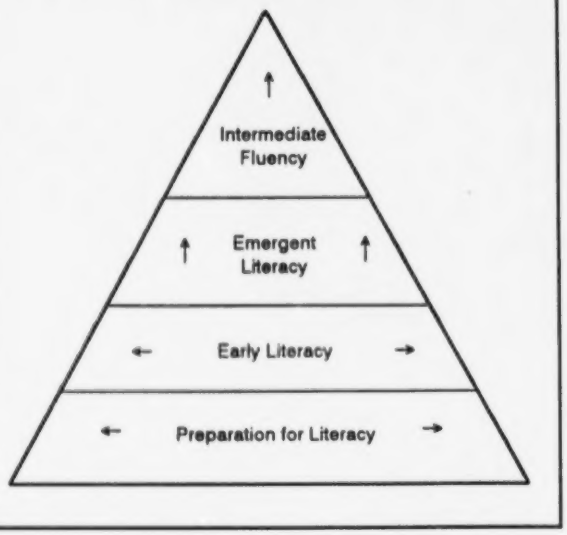
Literacy Development in a Second Language

Just as with oral language, second language learners progress through a predictable sequence of developmental stages in their acquisition of reading, writing, and spelling abilities in the target language.

Stages of Literacy Development

The chart shown in Figure 1 represents four stages learners pass through as they acquire age-appropriate literacy abilities in their second language.

Figure 1. Stages of Literacy Development



As an example, let's trace this development in writing:

1. At the *preparation for writing** stage, learners would engage in symbolic production such as the production of pictures, drawings, and reproductive verbal behavior (copying known words, tracing).
2. At the *early performance** stage, learners would generate single words and phrases with a good deal of cross-lingual production evident ("filling-in," borrowing from the native language).
3. At the *emergent writing* stage, more organization would be evident, language use would improve, and the mechanics and conventions of the target language would begin to appear.
4. At the *intermediate* stage, the learner would show the need to refine production skills and learn more about the variety of outlets for his or her growing writing abilities (narrative and expository texts; prose and poetry).

Skills Development Across Stages

Various skills in writing are being acquired as the learner progresses through the stages of development outlined. These skills fall into the general areas of organization, vocabulary usage, grammatical construction or language use, and mechanics (punctuation, capitalization, and spelling). Skills in reading might include decoding ability (sight word knowledge and phonetic analysis), vocabulary comprehension, prediction, text-sampling skills, fluency, or reading rate, as well as extent of background knowledge and experience the reader brings to the text.

By assessing skills development, the teacher can address the particular needs of students who are at the same *stage* of development overall.

Disability Effects

As with the previous section on oral language development, participants are reminded that most of what has been written on second language literacy acquisition concerns nondisabled individuals. As a result, it is important to consider the effects sensory, memory, cognitive, neurological, motor, attention, and behavior deficits will have on the acquisition of reading, writing, and spelling in a second language.

Conducive Environments for Second Language Literacy Acquisition

Optimal development in reading and writing will occur when the following conditions are met:

- The focus of instruction is on meaning and the purposeful exchange of meaning between reader and writer.
- The content of instruction is relevant to the learner's needs in and out of school.
- The focus is on integrative approaches (whole text comprehension and production) rather than on synthetic approaches (isolated subskill development).
- Interlanguage forms are accepted at early stages.
- Appropriate feedback is given both in terms of the amount of feedback the learner can handle and the manner in which it is delivered.
- Plentiful opportunities are provided to engage in literacy activities in the second language.
- Encouragement is provided by peers and adults to sustain the learner's efforts.

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* **Note:** These stages only occur in second language writing development if no writing skills have been developed in any language (young child; older learner from oral cultural tradition).

Source: Multisystem: Systematic Instructional Planning for Exceptional Bilingual Students. (Reston, VA: Department of Professional Development, The Council for Exceptional Children, 1989), pp. 32–38. Contact CEC for information on the Academy Training Program for Exceptional Bilingual Students, 703/264-9447.

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13

MAY 1991

LEARNING STYLES STRATEGIES CAN HELP STUDENTS AT RISK

Marie Carbo and Helen Hodges

During the past decade, mounting research evidence (Carbo, Dunn, & Dunn, 1986) has demonstrated that matching students' learning styles with appropriate instructional strategies improves their ability to concentrate and learn. This research indicates that many students who are at risk, especially inner city youth in grades 1 to 12 who have disabilities, have learning styles that are at odds with the styles required to succeed in traditional educational systems. Accommodating the learning styles of at-risk students consistently has resulted in increased academic achievement and improved incidence of discipline problems (Carbo, Dunn, & Dunn, 1986; Hodges, 1985; LaShell, 1986; Sudzina, 1987; Wheeler, 1980). Similar, dramatic gains in mathematics and reading have been reported by Hodges (1985, 1987).

For 13 years we have been involved in the practical application of learning styles theory and research to assist at-risk youngsters. Our work has been with truants, potential dropouts, and students with behavioral disorders and other disabilities, as well as inservicing their teachers and administrators. We have helped to establish learning styles research, pilot projects, and programs—for both suburban and inner city schools—through staff inservice training, curriculum redesign, demonstration of learning styles techniques, and program evaluation. We have found these teaching techniques effective with at-risk youngsters.

What Are Learning Styles?

There are a number of conceptual models of learning styles. Each shares the premise that not all people learn the same way (Dunn, DeBello, Brennan, & Murrain, 1981). Among the most widely used learning styles model in U. S. schools (Wedlund, 1987) is the Dunn model (Dunn & Dunn, 1978).

The Dunn model describes learning styles in terms of how the individual's ability to learn new or difficult material is affected by the following variables: (a) the immediate environment (noise level, temperature, amount of light, and furniture design); (b) emotionality (degree of motivation, persistence, responsibility, and need for structure); (c) sociological needs (learning alone or with peers, learning with adults present, learning in groups); (d) physical characteristics (auditory, visual, tactile, and kinesthetic strengths, best time of day for learning, need for food and drink while learning, and mobility requirements); and (e) psychological inclinations (global and analytic strengths).

Learning Style Characteristics of At-Risk Students

Research indicates that many at-risk students have not been taught with strategies, methods, and materials that accommodate their learning style preferences and strengths (Carbo, 1978; 1983a,b; Della Valle, Dunn, Dunn, Geisert, Sinatra, & Zenhausern 1986; Dunn, 1988; Hodges, 1982, 1985, 1987; Kroon, 1985; LaShell, 1986; Lynch, 1981; Perrin, 1984; Sudzina, 1987; Wheeler, 1980). On the contrary, their learning styles and instructional approaches have been seriously mismatched for prolonged periods of time.

To determine specifically how to teach a youngster to read across all subject areas, we have administered the Reading Style Inventory (RSI) (Carbo, 1982), which provides specific information about the youngster's strengths and preferences while reading and suggests compatible teaching strategies, methods, and materials. Along with our colleagues, we have assessed the learning styles of thousands of at-risk students. The majority of these youngsters learn best in an informal, highly structured environment that contains soft light and has headsets available for those who learn best with quiet or music—such environments that seldom are provided in our schools.

Compared to achievers, at-risk youngsters also tend to be significantly less visual and auditory and have higher preferences for tactile/kinesthetic stimuli and greater needs for mobility and intake (food or drink). They tend to be unmotivated or strongly adult-motivated, can concentrate and learn best with an adult or with peers, are most alert during the late morning or early afternoon hours, and most important, they are global learners (see Figure 1).

Mismatching students' learning styles with instruction results in their feeling anxious and even physically ill when learning (Carbo, Dunn, & Dunn, 1986). Their frustration and anxiety levels involve their brain more in coping with stress than in learning the task at hand. Hart (1983) has explained how the cerebrum "downshifts" during the times of anxiety:

> The student seems frozen, unable to think, and either can't talk or makes wild stabs at right answers. The less-able students, particularly, downshift under threat of public failure. (p. 9)

By contrast, when learning styles have been matched to appropriate instructional approaches, teachers have reported sharp decreases in stress (Carbo, 1983b; Hamilton, 1983; Hodges, 1982, 1987; LaShell, 1986). A typical observation is that of Hamilton (1983), who worked with sixth graders who

Figure 1
GLOBAL/ANALYTIC READING STYLES CHECKLIST*

Scoring:	
Strongly Analytic:	14-18
Moderately Analytic:	9-13
Fairly Analytic:	4-8
Slightly Analytic:	0-3

Analytic Students Often:

____ 1. Process information sequentially and logically.
2. Solve problems systematically.
____ 3. Concentrate and learn when information is presented in small, logical steps.
____ 4. Enjoy doing puzzles (e.g., crossword, jigsaw).
____ 5. Like to follow step-by-step directions.
____ 6. Can understand a rule without examples.
____ 7. Enjoy learning facts such as dates and names.
____ 8. Enjoy learning rules and using them.
____ 9. Enjoy learning phonics.
____ 10. Understand and apply phonic rules.
____ 11. Recall letter names and sounds easily.
____ 12. Can decode words out of context.
____ 13. Recall low-interest words (e.g., "what," "fan") almost as easily as high-interest words (e.g., "elephant," "monster").
____ 14. Are critical and analytic when reading.
____ 15. Can identify the details in a story.
____ 16. Recall many facts after listening to and/or reading a story.
____ 17. Easily list story events in logical, sequential order.
____ 18. Like to do reading skill exercises.

Global Students Often:

____ 1. Concentrate and learn when information is presented as a gestalt or whole.
____ 2. Respond to emotional appeals.
____ 3. Tend to like fantasy and humor.
____ 4. Get "wrapped up" in a story and do not concentrate on the facts.
____ 5. Process information subjectively and in patterns.
____ 6. Need to know the essence of a story before reading/hearing it.
____ 7. Need examples of a rule to understand the rule itself.
____ 8. Understand "concrete" examples better than those that are "abstract."
____ 9. Easily can identify the main ideas in a story.
____ 10. Are unconcerned about dates, names, or specifics.
____ 11. Recall information easily when it is presented in the form of an anecdote.
____ 12. Will concentrate and pay attention better if the goal of the lesson is clearly stated at the beginning.
____ 13. Need to learn with high-interest, meaningful materials.
____ 14. Do not enjoy doing isolated skill exercises.
____ 15. Are able to learn a reading skill if the lesson is DRAWN from a story already read.
____ 16. Understand better if a story is enhanced by visuals (drawings, cartoons, photographs).
____ 17. Recall high-interest words ("elephant," "circus," "dinosaur") much more easily than low-interest words (e.g., "met," "bet").
____ 18. Use story context to figure out unknown words.

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were poor readers. At the inception of the school year, Hamilton had many discipline problems and had to issue detention slips regularly. After implementing the recommendations of the RSI for 1 school year, she described the following transformation:

> I ended up with absolutely no discipline problems. Their grades improved, their attitude towards reading and the class improved. There was a much less stressful environment. They volunteered a lot more. They did their work, enjoyed it and completed it in half the time. (p. 6)

Similar findings were reported by LaShell (1986), whose 1-year research study with 90 learning disabled students resulted in a 17-month gain in reading comprehension for students whose learning styles and instruction were matched, compared to a 4-month gain for the students whose learning styles had not been matched to instruction. LaShell's data became even more compelling when she discovered that the previous school year, when the experimental group had the same teachers for reading but no attempt was made to match their learning styles, the children gained an average of only 4 months in reading achievement.

Strategies for Basing Instruction on Learning Styles

The following strategies have been used successfully by teachers. They represent some of the most effective techniques from learning-styles-based instruction.

1. *Identify and match students' learning style strengths, especially perceptual and global/analytic abilities.* A checklist for identifying and accommodating students' learning styles can be found on pages 6 and 7 of the *RSI Manual* (Carbo, 1981). In addition, the RSI produces both individual and group computer profiles along with specific teaching recommendations for each youngster. The *RSI Manual* describes how to implement those recommendations.

2. *Share learning styles information with students.* Students who understand and then are provided opportunities to make use of their learning styles tend to feel valued, respected, and empowered. Such feelings usually have translated into sharply decreased discipline problems and higher student achievement (Carbo, 1978, 1987; Della Valle, Dunn, Dunn, Geisert, Sinatra, & Zenhausern, 1986; Dunn, 1988; Hodges, 1985, 1987; Kroon, 1985; LaShell, 1986; Lynch, 1981; Perrin, 1984; Wheeler, 1980).

3. *Deemphasize skill work requiring a strongly analytic learning style.* A good deal of the commercially prepared skill work is particularly unmotivating for students who are global learners because strongly analytic abilities are required. Often, students must understand complex directions with few or no examples provided, and the skill being practiced is overly fragmented and presented in an uninteresting way. Regardless of the subject, remember that most at-risk youngsters tend to be strongly global learners who need to learn with high-interest materials that involve them emotionally (Carbo, 1987).

Poorly written and boring stories and unnecessary workbook pages should be omitted. This procedure will accomplish two important objectives. First, the overall quality of the instructional program will be improved. Second, the time saved in not using poor-quality materials can be used to schedule more interesting and worthwhile experiences. Approaches that have appealed to global learners include listening to and reading good literature, acting in plays, creating models, drawing pictures and writing about them, and using puppets for storytelling.

4. *Begin lessons globally.* When new concepts are introduced analytically, with rules and detailed exercises, strongly global learners who are not analytic usually become confused because facts without context are meaningless to them. Therefore, start lessons globally with anecdotes and visual aids that develop relevant concepts. Provide many concrete experiences that deepen understandings, such as interviews, skits, model construction, and trips. After the importance and context of a skill are understood, many youngsters who are highly global learners are capable of learning rules and performing exercises related to that skill. Some examples of effective, global strategies for introducing a chapter in a text are as follows: (a) show a related filmstrip or film and discuss the major concepts; (b) tell the students what the chapter is about and arouse their interest with personal anecdotes; and (c) read portions of the chapter aloud while students follow along in their books. These procedures provide global learners with an overview of the topic and present the new vocabulary in context.

5. *Use a variety of methods in reading.* The reading methods selected should help children read with ease, enjoyment, fluency, and good comprehension. An extremely effective reading approach for poor readers (many of whom are strongly global and more visual than auditory), has been a special tape-recorded method (Carbo, 1978, 1985). For students who read on grade level or above, commercial book recordings can help to increase comprehension and reading fluency. Phonic instruction should be reserved for analytic youngsters who are capable of learning and applying phonic rules (Carbo, 1987; Dunn, 1988; Lerner, 1971).

6. *Involve the tactile and kinesthetic modalities of the learner and include many visuals.* Many at-risk students are tactile/kinesthetic as well as global. Such youngsters require resources that involve their hands and/or whole body in learning (e.g., paints, games, typewriters, computers, sand trays to write words in, floor games, and manipulatives), tactile/kinesthetic learning experiences (e.g., acting in plays, pantomiming, going on trips, building models), and visuals (e.g., overhead transparencies, photographs, films, drawings, filmstrips).

7. *Provide appropriate amounts of structure.* Many at-risk youngsters thrive in well-structured learning situations. They need a highly organized environment with materials that, for example, are numbered and color-coded. Limit choices as appropriate, give clear directions, and provide time limits for the completion of work. For motivated, persistent, responsible youngsters who are self-structured, allow more choices, give fewer directions, and provide more flexible time limits. By analyzing the computerized group profiles of the RSI, teachers can ascertain the degree of need each youngster has for structure. Students can then be grouped according to those needs.

8. *Allow youngsters to work with peers, a friend, teachers, alone, and so on, depending on their sociological preferences.* Whenever feasible, allow students to select their workmate(s). Many at-risk students work well with peers in cooperative groupings (Dunn, 1985; Hodges, 1982).

9. *Establish quiet working sections a sufficient distance from noisier areas.* These might be placed in hallways or alcoves.

10. *Create at least one special work area in the classroom by placing file cabinets or bookcases perpendicular to a wall.* One possible work area is an informal section containing rugs, pillows, and a soft chair. Another is an art area or group project section.

11. *Experiment with scheduling the most difficult subjects during the late morning and early afternoon hours.* If you notice that your students are more receptive and alert at those times than they are during the early morning, continue with the later scheduling of those subjects. To accommodate a variety of styles in a classroom, determine the best time of day for the majority of your students through discussion with the students and/or the data provided by the RSI. Try to schedule the most difficult subjects during those times.

Conclusion

Learning styles research provides educators with some specific techniques for providing an equal educational opportunity for the many at-risk youngsters presently in our schools. Rather than focusing on students' disabilities and learning problems, learning-styles-based instruction makes use of the individual's strengths and preferences, thereby removing many of the learning barriers instilled after years of repeated failure. The positive results of using learning styles strategies are apparent almost immediately to teachers and students. In the words of one student, "I feel that learning styles has helped me become more knowledgeable and it makes me feel good

about myself. It makes me feel smarter. It makes it easier for me to learn."

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Source: TEACHING Exceptional Children, 1988, *20*(4), 55–58.

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14

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#E498

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

Donna M. Gollnick and Philip C. Chinn

Demographic Composition

After remaining level through most of the 1980's, the child population of the United States is on the rise. The number of persons under the age of 18 will increase from 64 million in 1990 to 67 million in the year 2000. The number of babies born in 1988—3.9 million—was the greatest since 1964.

Young people from the least well off demographic groups form a growing segment of the child population. Black and Hispanic youth, who together constitute about 27% of the current child population, will make up nearly 33% of the child population in the year 2010.

In 1987, over 170,000 people under the age of 20 legally immigrated to the United States. The primary regions of origin were Asia and South America, and the countries contributing the most immigrant children were Mexico, the Philippines, Korea, the Dominican Republic, and Jamaica (*U.S. Children and Their Families*, 1989).

Black Americans are the largest minority group in the United States—28.9 million in 1985, about 12% of the total population. Black Americans are drawn from a diverse range of cultures and countries in Africa, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. The U.S. Hispanic population (not including the population of Puerto Rico) surpassed the 20-million mark in 1989. This represents a 39% growth since 1980—five times that of the nation as a whole. From 1985 to 2000, the Hispanic population is expected to grow by 46%. The term *Hispanic* refers to persons of all races whose cultural heritage is tied to the use of the Spanish language and Latino culture.

In 1990, over 30% of students in public schools, some 12 million, were from minority groups (Quality Education for Minorities Project, 1990).

In the school year 1988–1989, approximately 4.5 million children with disabilities received special education (U.S. Department of Education, 1990). Applying the 30% minority estimate to this number yields a minimum of 1.4 million children with disabilities who are also minority group members. In order for these students to develop to their fullest potential, educators will need to be skilled as both special educators and facilitators of multicultural education.

Purposes of Multicultural Education

It is important for all students to develop a multicultural perspective in order to enhance

- A good self-concept and self-understanding.
- Sensitivity to and understanding of others, including cultural groups in the United States and other nations.
- The ability to perceive and understand multiple, sometimes conflicting, cultural and national interpretations of and perspectives on events, values, and behavior.
- The ability to make decisions and take effective action based on a multicultural analysis and synthesis.
- Open minds when addressing issues.
- Understanding of the process of stereotyping, a low degree of stereotypical thinking, and pride in self and respect for all peoples (Cortes, 1978).

Areas within the educational setting in which multicultural education is implemented are textbooks and instructional materials, curriculum and instruction, teacher behavior, and school climate (Gollnick & Chinn, 1990).

Textbooks and Instructional Materials

How teachers use textbooks and other instructional materials is extremely important in providing multicultural education. Teachers need to recognize subtle as well as blatant forms of bias such as invisibility, stereotyping, selectivity and imbalance, unreality, fragmentation and isolation, and language (Sadker & Sadker, 1978).

Invisibility means that certain microcultures, including disability groups, are underrepresented in materials. This omission implies that these groups have less value, importance, and significance in our society.

Stereotyping assigns traditional and rigid roles or attributes to a group. Stereotyping occurs across cultural and exceptionality groups.

Selectivity and imbalance occur when issues and situations are interpreted from only one perspective, usually the perspective of the majority group. With such an emphasis, minority persons and individuals with disabilities often do not learn about the contributions of members of their cultural groups to the development of our society. Such biases prevent all students from realizing the complexity of historical and contemporary situations and developments.

Unreality is most likely to present itself in the portrayal of history and contemporary life experiences. Controversial topics are glossed over, and discussions of discrimination and prejudice are avoided. This unrealistic coverage denies children the information needed to recognize, understand, and perhaps conquer the problems that plague our society. Contemporary problems faced by individuals with disabilities and those from diverse racial and ethnic groups are often disguised or simply not included.

Fragmentation and isolation occur when publishers discuss issues, contributions, and information about various groups in a separate section or chapter apart from the regular text. This add-on approach suggests that the experiences and contributions of these groups are merely an interesting diversion, not an integral part of historical and contemporary developments.

Language bias occurs when materials blatantly omit such things as gender, disability, or ethnic group references.

Making Curriculum Multicultural

Components of multicultural education that are included in many educational programs are ethnic, minority, and women's studies; bilingual programs; cultural awareness; human relations; and values clarification. Concepts include racism, sexism, prejudice, discrimination, oppression, powerlessness, power inequality, equality, and stereotyping.

If teaching a culturally diverse student population, educators need to determine the microcultures that exist in the community. Schools that are on or near Indian reservations will include students from the American Indian tribes in the area as well as some non-Indians. Urban schools typically include multiethnic populations and students from middle and lower socioeconomic levels; inner-city schools are likely to have a high proportion of poor students. Teachers in Appalachian-area schools will need to be concerned about poor and middle-class families with fundamentalist backgrounds.

One strategy for multiculturalizing curriculum and instruction is teaching from a multicultural perspective. This approach will probably require some major changes in the educational program. In this approach educators will take affirmative steps to ensure that cultural diversity and exceptionality are reflected in the curriculum. It should facilitate the development of attitudes and values conducive to the preservation and promotion of ethnic and cultural diversity as a positive quality of society (Gay, 1977). It will enhance students' self-concepts as they develop pride in their own and other cultural heritages (Gay, 1977). Without too much effort, teachers can locate supplementary materials, information, and visual aids about people of other major cultures and people with disabilities. This information should be included as part of the curriculum in every subject area, regardless of how culturally diverse the community is.

Attitudes and Teaching Styles

A teacher's behavior in the classroom is a key factor in helping all students reach their potential, regardless of gender, ethnicity, age, religion, language, or exceptionality. Unknowingly, educators often transmit biased messages to students. Most educators do not consciously or intentionally stereotype students or discriminate against them; they usually try to treat all students fairly and equitably. However, we have learned our attitudes and behaviors in a society that has been ageist, racist, sexist, and ethnocentric. Some biases have been internalized to such a degree that we do not realize that we are biased. When teachers are able to recognize the subtle and unintentional biases in their behavior, positive changes can be made in the classroom (Sadker & Sadker, 1978).

Another area that teachers might investigate and change to better meet the needs of a culturally diverse student population is that of teaching and learning styles. Both teaching and learning styles can be categorized as either field independent or field sensitive. Field-independent teachers encourage independent student achievement and competition among students. Field-sensitive teachers are more interpersonally oriented and prefer situations that allow them to use personal, conversational techniques. Similarly, field- sensitive students perform better in social situations such as group work; field-independent students work well on independent projects. Often the teacher's style differs from the learning style of the student, causing a classroom situation that may not be conducive to helping students reach their potential. Ramirez and Castaneda (1974) showed that teachers could learn to organize learning environments conducive to individual students' cognitive styles so that all students could benefit equally from teaching.

Positive School Climate

A school that affirms multiculturalism will integrate the community in its total program. Not only will the educators know and understand the community, but the parents and community will know and participate in the school activities. As long as members of the community feel unwelcome in the school, they are not likely to initiate involvement. The first step in multiculturalizing the school is development of positive and supportive relations between the school and the community. Teachers can assist by asking community members to participate in class activities by talking about their jobs, hobbies, or experiences in a certain area. They can initiate contacts with families of students. They can participate in some community events. A sincere interest in the community, rather than indifference or patronage, will help to bridge the gap that often exists between the school and community.

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This digest is based on *Multicultural Education in a Pluralistic Society*, Third Edition, by Donna M. Gollnick and Philip C. Chinn. (Columbus, OH: Merrill Publishing Company, 1990), 272–309.

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Mini Bib 15

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INSTRUCTION AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT FOR CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE EXCEPTIONAL LEARNERS

Sandra H. Fradd

Curriculum and Instructional Practices

Bermudez, A. B. (1990). In V. I. Correa & S. H. Fradd (Eds.), *Module 3: Second language development & instruction.* Gainesville, FL: The University of Florida. Bilingual/ESOL Special Education Collaboration and Reform Project.

This module provides an overview of the actual language development of disabled and at-risk limited English proficient and language minority students and offers field tested resources and suggestions for developing the English language proficiency of such students.

Berney, T. D., & Carey, C. (1989). *Project RECURSO, 1987–88.* Brooklyn: New York City Board of Education, Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 310 636).

Project RECURSO was designed to improve assessment procedures, teacher and support personnel skills, and parent participation on behalf of limited English proficient students, especially those with possible special education needs. A description of program objectives and outcomes is provided in this report.

Chan, D. M. (1986). Curriculum development for limited English proficient exceptional Chinese children. *Rural Special Education Quarterly, 8*(1), 26–31. (EJ 375 367).

Immigration history, demographics, legal issues, culture, language, and learning styles are discussed in this article under the broader theme of appropriate curricula for exceptional Chinese children.

Collier, C., & Hoover, J. J. (1987). *Cognitive learning strategies for minority handicapped students.* Lindale, TX: Hamilton Publications. (NCBE Accession No. BE 016 269, 1-800-321-6223).

This book addresses the issues of cognition and learning style in terms of minority students with disabilities in both special education and mainstream classrooms. Four important areas are addressed: cognitive style, learning style, cognitive strategy clusters, and program collaboration. Practical guidelines for accommodating minority students' learning styles are emphasized. Numerous examples are provided to illustrate the use of these strategies.

Dodson, C. J. (1985). Second language acquisition and bilingual development: A theoretical framework. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 6*(5), 325–346. (EJ 329 899).

The theory presented here states that all developing and developed bilinguals have a preferred and a second language, and that developing bilinguals increases their competence in a new second language through an overall fluctuating activity between bilingual preferred/second language-medium-oriented communication and monolingual second-language-medium-oriented communication. Implications of the theory are discussed with respect to instructional considerations. There are theoretical implications for bilingual students with disabilities.

Fairfax County Public Schools. (1986). *Teaching directions using a controlled prepositional vocabulary: Supplementary lessons for use with limited English proficient (LEP) students enrolled in ESL or special education classes. Grades K–3.* Fairfax County, VA: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 279 157.)

A unit of instruction used with limited English proficient students in kindergarten through grade 3 who are being screened for placement in special education programs is described. The unit can be adapted for use with LEP students receiving special education services. The unit contains 15 lessons of 15 to 60 minutes duration.

Fairfax County Public Schools. (1986). *The friendly letter. Supplemental lessons and activities for use with limited English proficient (LEP) students being considered for special education services. Grades 9–12.* Fairfax County, VA: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 279 156).

A unit of instruction for use with limited English proficient students in grades 9 through 12 being screened for special education services is outlined. The unit can be used with students at a fifth grade or higher level of achievement. Each lesson contains objectives, a list of instructional materials, procedures, and evaluation suggestions. Suggestions are given for developing additional lessons. A list of useful resources is appended.

Fairfax County Public Schools. (1986). *Driver education. Supplemental lessons and activities for use with limited English proficient students enrolled in ESL or special education classes.* Fairfax County, VA: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 279 159).

A curriculum is described for use with limited English proficient students in English as a second language or special

education classes who are enrolled in the driver education course. The 14 lessons described here require a basic proficiency in understanding, speaking, reading, and writing English. Each lesson includes objectives, a list of instructional materials needed for implementation, procedures and class activities, and suggestions for evaluation. A list of useful resources is also appended.

Fairfax County Public Schools. (1986). *Zoo animals. Supplemental lessons and activities to develop vocabulary and sentence and writing skills of limited English proficient (LEP) students in ESL or special education classes. Grades K–3.* Fairfax County, VA: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 279 158).

An instructional unit that enhances student interest and curiosity about animals and promotes conceptual growth through development of observational and listening skills is discussed. The lessons and activities are for use with limited English proficient students in kindergarten through fourth grade who are receiving services from the English as a second language or learning disabilities programs. Each lesson contains objectives, a list of instructional materials necessary for implementation, procedures and class activities, and suggestions for evaluation. A list of supplemental materials is appended.

Flores, B., et al. (1986) Examining assumptions and instructional practices related to the acquisition of literacy with bilingual special education students. *Journal of Reading, Writing, and Learning Disabilities International, 2*(2), 147–159. (ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, 2,89; EJ 349 289).

The purpose of this article is to propose a new approach to instruction based on theoretical and research advances that stress holistic literacy in real situations. An example of interactive journal writing between a teacher and trilingual 11-year-old with mild disabilities is presented as a case study example.

Goldman, S., & Rueda, R. (1988). *Developing writing skills in bilingual exceptional children.* (NCBE Accession No. BE 016 345, 1-800-321-6223).

Two theoretical approaches to writing, cognitive-developmental and functional-interactive, are reviewed, along with their implications for the instruction of bilingual exceptional children. Both approaches stress the use of goal-directed and meaningful writing tasks in which the teacher provides interactional scaffolding for learning activities.

Hoover, J. J., & Collier, C. (1986). *Classroom management through curricular adaptations: Educating minority handicapped students.* Lindale, TX: Hamilton Publications.

Written for educators of minority language students with disabilities, this book provides practical suggestions for meeting the unique educational needs of these special learners. This book shows special educators how to effectively educate and manage minority students with disabilities through curricular adaptations. Key features of this book include a guide for curricular adaptations, special considerations when educating minority learners with disabilities and presentation of over 20 teaching and behavior management techniques.

Miller, R. C., Berney, T. D., Mulkey, L., & Saggese, R., (1988). *Chapter 1/P.S.E.N. Remedial reading and mathematics program 1986–87. Final evaluation report and evaluation summary, O.E.A. evaluation report.* Brooklyn: New York City Board of Education, Office of Educational Assessment. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 302 049).

This program was designed to provide supplementary instruction to eligible English-speaking and limited English proficient students in self-contained special education classes. A secondary goal was to provide orientation and inservice training to special education teachers.

Narang, H. L. (1986) *An annotated bibliography of articles on the teaching of reading to children with special needs.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 274 951).

Focusing on the teaching of reading to children with special needs, this bibliography includes citations with brief annotations on such instructional aspects as spelling, cloze procedures, language acquisition, and remedial reading. The annotations are divided into five sections: (1) general; (2) English as a second language, bilingual children; (3) gifted children; (4) reluctant readers; and (5) remedial/disabled readers.

NCTE/TESOL Liaison Committee, 1988. (1989). A short bibliography for mainstream teachers with students. *Language Arts, 66*(4), 466–467. (EJ 390 411, Dialog).

This article provides 25 citations to books, journal articles, and other publications for mainstream teachers with English-as-a-second-language students including those who may have special learning problems.

Nelson, L., & Phillips, R. (1987). Language development in social studies. *History and Social Science Teacher, 22*(3), 156–159. (EJ 353 094, Dialog).

This article describes a program in a 10th-grade geography class for helping students who speak English as a second language and who mainly have language disabilities to develop better writing skills. Specifically, the article examines the use of ESL teaching techniques to accomplish this task.

New York City Board of Education. (1987). *Fusion: An ESL/content areas resource activities guide and resource activities packet (pilot editions).* Brooklyn: New York City Board of Education, Office of Bilingual Education. (NCBE Accession No. BE 016 685, 1-800-321-6223).

This curriculum combines English-as-a-second-language skills with survival topics dealing with both academic and social needs of upper elementary and intermediate level limited English proficient students. Special adaptations and instructional approaches are specifically designed for students in bilingual special education settings.

New York City Board of Education. (1987). *Chapter 1/P.S.E.N. Remedial reading and mathematics program, 1985-86 end of the year O.E.A. evaluation report.* Brooklyn: New York City Board of Education, Office of Educational Assessment. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 292 906).

A holistic approach to reading and math instruction including computer application is described in this report. Students in bilingual and special education programs were included.

New York City Board of Education. (1988). *Project CABE, 1986–87, O.E.A. Evaluation Section report.* Brooklyn: New York City Board of Education, Office of Educational Assessment. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 310 609).

This report describes the first-year activities of Project CABE (Content Area Bilingual Education), which aims to improve

instruction and increase parental involvement for limited English proficient Spanish-speaking learners who have disabling conditions in grades 4 through 9.

Nikolic, T. (1986) Teaching a foreign language to visually impaired children in school. *Language Teaching, 19*(3), 217–231.

Methods and approaches for helping blind and visually impaired learners develop proficiency in a new language are presented here. Suggestions include information on selection of instructional materials, course organization, media, games, writing instruction, and assessment.

Ortiz, A. A., & Hernandez-Pound, A. (1986). *Curriculum and instruction for exceptional bilingual students* [a literature review]. Austin: University of Texas, Handicapped Minority Research Institute on Language Proficiency. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 261 482).

The annotated bibliography was designed to identify recommendations and best practices for instructing bilingual students with disabilities. The annotations are organized according to six headings: (1) policies and legal mandates for serving exceptional bilingual students; (2) first and second language use in instruction; (3) educational planning; (4) recommended strategies, approaches, and programs for exceptional bilingual students; (5) curricula and materials; and (6) teacher training.

Parks, M. A., McKinney, F. L., & Mahlman, R. A. (1987). *Characteristics of effective secondary vocational education programs for special populations.* Columbus: Ohio State University, National Center for Research in Vocational Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 289 050).

This study examined the characteristics of effective secondary vocational education programs for a variety of special needs populations including limited English proficient individuals and those with disabilities. Suggestions are offered for program development and implementation based on the data collected through this study.

Plata, M. (1986). Instructional planning for limited English proficient students. *Journal of Instructional Psychology, 13*(1), 32–39. (ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, 2,88. EJ 336 214.

This article presents an integrated perspective of special education and bilingual education instructional strategies for teachers of limited English proficient students with mental disabilities. It proposes an instructional management and lesson plan model, describes components, and reviews advantages of the model for teaching the target population.

Ramirez, B. A., Clark-Johnson, G., Valero-Figueira, E., & Yee, L. Y. (1988). Culturally and linguistically diverse children: Black children, Hispanic children, Asian children, and young American Indian children. *TEACHING Exceptional Children, 20*(4), 45–51. (EJ 372 128, Dialog).

Appropriate instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse children requires distinguishing among individual needs related to culture, language, poverty, mobility, and exceptionalities. Suggestions are presented regarding prereferral, assessment, curriculum, parental involvement, and program coordination for students who may be at risk for learning difficulties.

Shermis, M. (1989). *Word processing and writing instruction for students with special needs: Focused access to selected topics* (FAST). Bibliography No. 11. ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 307 607).

Addressing writing instruction for students with special needs, this annotated bibliography contains 26 references of articles and papers in the ERIC database. The citations in the first section discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using word processors in writing instruction with students with learning disabilities and suggest instructional approaches to use. The second section lists sources that examine the benefits of word processors to basic writers, along with ideas on how and when to introduce word-processing skills. Articles and papers in the last section deal with how to integrate the use of computers into English-as-a-second-language classrooms.

Silberman, R. K., & Correa, V. I. (1989). Survival words and phrases for professionals who work with students who are bilingual and severely/multiply handicapped, and with their families. *DPH Journal, 10*(2), 57–66. (EJ 392 211).

This article provides suggestions for developing bilingual lessons for students with severe/multiple disabilities and includes a list of frequently used Spanish words and phrases for professional use in communicating with students and parents.

Smiley, F. (1989). *Special education: Learning disabled students vs. limited English proficient students differentiations.* (NCBE Accession No. BE 017 011, 1-800-321-6223).

This paper describes a workshop intended to assist school personnel in differentiating between students with learning disabilities and limited English proficient students. The characteristics of both groups of students are described and assessment and instructional procedures are recommended.

Texas Education Agency. (1987). *Science framework, kindergarten-grade 12.* Austin: Texas Education Agency, Division of Curriculum Development. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 287 743).

This publication is designed to help school administrators, curriculum planners, and teachers implement science education programs. Instruction for special student populations, including those in special education, programs for the gifted and talented, compensatory education, and bilingual and migrant education is discussed.

Weinrich, B. D., Glasser, A. J., & Johnston, E. B. (1986). *A sourcebook of adolescent pragmatic activities: Theory and intervention for language therapy (grades 7–12 and ESL).* Tucson, AZ: Communication Skill Builders. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 275 097).

This sourcebook contains an organized series of lesson plans for remediating pragmatic language problems in adolescents and students in English-as-a-second-language instruction.

Wilkinson, C. Y. (1985). *Teacher interactions with handicapped and Hispanic students: An annotated bibliography.* Austin: University of Texas, Handicapped Minority Research Institute on Language Proficiency. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 261 484).

Within this bibliography citations are grouped in four categories: (1) general findings about classroom interactions/expectations and their effects; (2) relationships between ethnicity and classroom interactions/expectations; (3) relationships between disabling conditions and student/teacher interactions; (4) relationships between disabling conditions and teacher expectations.

Individualized Education Programs

Ortiz, A. A., & Wilkinson, C. Y. (1989). Adapting IEPs for limited English proficient students. *Academic Therapy, 24*(5), 555–568. (EJ 393 608, Dialog).

The study of individualized education programs developed for 203 limited English proficient Hispanic elementary students found that a student's bilingualism and level of English proficiency exerted little influence on selection of instructional goals. Native language or English-as-a-second-language instruction was infrequently incorporated into special education services.

Wilkinson, C. Y., Willig, A. C., & Ortiz, A. A. (1986). *Goals and objectives targeted in individualized education programs developed for exceptional limited English proficient and English proficient Hispanic students.* Austin: University of Texas, Department of Special Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 285 366).

This study was designed to identify the academic and behavioral areas most often addressed in the individualized education programs (IEPs) of limited English proficient and English proficient Hispanic students with mild disabilities, and to determine the priority rankings assigned by admission, review and dismissal by each area committee.

Issues Regarding the Education of Limited English Proficient Migrant Students with Disabilities

Baca, L., & Harris, K. C. (1988). Teaching migrant exceptional children. *TEACHING Exceptional Children, 20*(4), 32–35. (EJ 372 125, Dialog).

This article outlines the educational needs of migrant exceptional children in terms of native language instruction, English-as-a-second-language instruction, self-concept enhancement, acculturation enhancement, and family and community involvement. The importance of the individualized education program is discussed and a summary list of educational guidelines is provided.

California Migrant Education. (1989). *Guide for student and program needs assessment.* Sacramento, CA: Author. (Mid-Hudson Migrant Center).

This manual offers an overview of the Student and Program Needs Assessment for assessing the educational needs of migrant students. This model is used to collect and examine information regarding students' attendance and promotion history, language proficiency, academic levels, bilingual abilities, special education needs, and health status. This system also provides information on the supplemental services migrant students receive such as Chapter 1, gifted instruction, vocational education, and special education.

Coballes-Vega, C., & Salend, S. J. (1989). Guidelines for assessing migrant handicapped students. *Diagnostique, 13*(2–4) 64–75. (Mid-Hudson Migrant Center).

The purpose of this article is to provide educators with guidelines for assessing the unique needs of migrant students. Specific guidelines include (a) identifying the student's language and cultural background; (b) examining adaptive behavior; (c) the Migrant Student Record Transfer System; (d) determining the student's medical needs; (e) involving migrant parents; (f) interviewing the student's teachers; (g) choosing appropriate assessment instruments; (h) employing curriculum-based assessment; and (i) establishing a network of community resources.

Reynolds, C. J., & Salend, S. J. (In press). Issues and programs in the delivery of special education services to migrant students with disabilities. *Journal of Educational Issues of Language Minority Students.*

One of the largest mobile groups of students in the United States is the children of migrant workers. This article discusses issues and programs in the delivery of services to migrant students with special needs.

Salend, S. J. (1990). A migrant education guide for special educators. *TEACHING Exceptional Children,* 22(2), 18–21. (EJ 402 526).

This article provides special educators with information on migrant education and the migrant lifestyle. Definition of key terms, a review of important demographic characteristics associated with the migrant lifestyle, an overview of migrant education services, procedures, and model programs are included. Strategies for acquiring more information about and receiving training in migrant education are also discussed.

Prereferral Screening and Instructional Activities and Interventions

Collier, C. (1988). *Referral, intervention, and instruction for culturally and linguistically different children who may be handicapped.* Proceedings of the Annual American Council on Rural Special Education, National Conference. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 299 748).

Rural teachers are confronted with the task of providing appropriate education to exceptional students, which includes the task of addressing the added elements of language and culture issues as these pertain to disabling conditions. Key points in the identification and instruction of these students are initial referral, early intervention, and appropriate placement within special services. This paper reviews the literature on these key points, focusing on the interrelationship of cultural and educational characteristics.

Vocational Instruction for Limited English Proficient Students with Special Needs

Feller, R. (1986). *A guidebook to "A Better Way": Serving special needs, non-traditional students and the Perkins Vocational Education Act.* Ft. Collins: Colorado State University, School of Occupational and Educational Studies. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 284 006).

This document accompanies a video training series entitled "A Better Way" for those serving students with special needs and nontraditional students, including those who are limited in English proficiency. The guidebook provides information to enable educators, parents, and human service personnel to help secondary and postsecondary students access vocational education and make the transition from school to employment and further training. Together, these materials can increase understanding of how to provide disadvantaged students and students with disabilities with guidance and special services assurances required by the Act. Materials on parents/guardians and students are available in both English and Spanish.

Gordon, R. (1988). *Special needs resources for vocational education.* Columbus: Ohio State University, National

Center for Research in Vocational Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 296 118).

Intended as a reference for vocational education personnel who serve special needs populations, this catalog identifies resource organizations that can provide information or technical assistance and recently developed materials for special needs groups and program areas. Both limited English proficient students and students with disabilities are included in this resource file.

Kellenbach, S. C. (1989). *Directory of human resources to better serve learners with special needs in vocational education.* Washington, DC: National Center for Research in Vocational Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 311 304).

This document lists names, titles, addresses, and telephone numbers of human resource organizations concerned with serving teachers of learners with special needs in vocational education.

Kellenbach, S. C. (1989). *Resources to facilitate the transition of learners with special needs from school to work or postsecondary education.* Washington, DC: National Center for Research in Vocational Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 308 317).

This document is intended to assist state and local administrators and other personnel working with persons with special needs in strengthening the opportunities for a smooth transition of these learners to workplaces and continuing education programs. Most of the literature and resources cited pertain to transition for students who have disabilities, although some resources pertain to transition for students who are disadvantaged or limited in English proficiency. An appendix gives resource addresses.

Comprehensive Publications Covering More Than One Topic

Ambert, A. N. (Ed.). (1988). *Bilingual education and English as a second language: A research handbook.* New York: Garland. (NCBE Accession No. BE 017 138, 1-800-321-6223).

This book addresses issues in assessment and program development in meeting the needs of limited English proficient students, including the needs of learners with disabilities. The focus includes current practices and available and needed research to address these pressing needs.

Carrasquillo, A. L. (1989, Spring). *Journal of the New York State Association for Bilingual Education.* Albany: NYSABE. (NCBE Accession No. BE 016 987, 1-800-321-6223).

The spring 1989 issue of this journal contains specific papers relevant to special needs students in the process of learning English as a new language.

Dao, M., & Grossman, H. (1985). *Identifying, instructing and rehabilitating Southeast Asian students with special needs, and counseling their parents.* (ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, 2,89; ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 273 068).

This publication addresses four major areas of need in working with Southeast Asian students: demographics and identification, determining and using the dominant language in assessment, culturally appropriate assessment and instruction, and comprehensive policy and planning.

Fradd, S. H., & Tikunoff, W. J. (1987). *Bilingual education and bilingual special education: A guide for administrators.* Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

The purpose of this book is to provide both school administrators and teachers with a comprehensive overview of current policy and practices as they relate to students whose first language is not English. The book is a summary of more than a decade of school effectiveness research in addressing the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Fradd, S. H., & Weismantel, M. J. (1989). *Meeting the needs of culturally and linguistically different students: A handbook for educators.* Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

This book is a sequel to the 1987 book *Bilingual Education and Bilingual Special Education: A Guide for Administrators.* It provides practical suggestions for the development, organization and implementation of effective programs. Chapters include understanding the need for change, organizing information, developing and monitoring school-based goals, implementing change and monitoring progress, developing collaboration within the school setting, involving families, and evaluating outcomes. The book also contains a comprehensive annotated list of widely used tests.

Garcia, H. S., & Chavez, R. C. (Eds.). (1988). *Ethnolinguistic issues in education.* Lubbock: Texas Tech University. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 309 002).

The 12 articles in this book present diverse views of bilingual and multicultural education including assessment and instruction of learners with disabilities.

Gonzalez, J. R. (1987). *Guide to multicultural education resources: An annotated bibliography* (rev. ed.). Albuquerque: University of New Mexico. (NCBE Accession No. BE 016 349, 1-800-321-6223).

This annotated bibliography provides information on the following topics: teacher training materials, ESL and language development, bilingual special education, parent training, research and evaluation, multicultural professional resources, the Southwest, multimedia, women's studies, children's materials, American Indians, Indochinese, and publishers' information.

Johnson, M. J., & Ramirez, B. A. (Eds). (1986). *American Indian exceptional children and youth.* Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children. (NCBE Accession No. BE 016 596, 1-800-321-6223).

This publication contains the proceedings from a symposium held in 1985 on exceptional American Indian children and youth sponsored by The Council for Exceptional Children. Seven papers were presented that addressed issues related to parents and families, assessment practices, cognitive styles, language development, gifted and talented children, personnel preparation, and policy.

Kitano, M. K., & Chinn, P. C. (Eds.). (1986). *Exceptional Asian children and youth.* (An ERIC Exceptional Child Education Report, ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, 2,89; ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 276 178).

This publication includes six papers growing out of a symposium addressing issues related to demographics, characteristics and needs, parents and families, assessment and curriculum, and service delivery models for Asian-American students with special education needs.

Lingren, J. A., Martinson, S. A., & Decker, M. (1989) *A bibliography of selected resources on cultural diversity for parents and professionals working with young children who have or are at risk for disabilities.* Chapel Hill, NC: National Early Childhood Technical Assistance System; and Minneapolis, MN: PACER Center. (NCBE Accession No. BE 017 290, 1-800-321-6223).

This bibliography lists printed materials and selected resource organizations that deal with a range of disabilities including limited English proficiency. Entries are organized in two categories: General information on cultural diversity and resource information on selected cultural/ethnic populations.

National Early Childhood Technical Assistance System. (1990). *A bibliography of selected resources on cultural diversity for parents and professionals working with young children who have, or are at risk for, disabilities.* Washington, DC: Office of Special Education programs, U. S. Department of Education. (CEC Ethnic and Multicultural Bulletin, Winter 1990).

This 68-page annotated bibliography lists books, journal articles, newsletters, and selected organizational resources related to early childhood education. However, the information is sufficiently broad to be of assistance to all age groups.

Ortiz, A. A., & Ramirez, B. A. (Eds.). *Schools and the culturally diverse exceptional student: Promising practices and future directions.* Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 298 699).

This book provides a cross-section of the papers presented at the 1986 Council for Exceptional Children Ethnic and Multicultural Symposia and is intended to provide a state-of-the-art overview of information on the education of culturally and linguistically diverse exceptional students.

Reetz, L., & Cerny, M. (1988). *A cross-cultural bibliography for rural special educators.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 306 047).

This bibliography contains 437 bibliographic citations, more than half focusing on topics relevant to bilingual and crosscultural special education in the rural parts of the United States.

RISE. (1989). Special Issue. *The Special EDge, 4*(3).

The November issue is largely devoted to concerns in serving culturally and linguistically diverse students in special education and other related programs.

Willig, A. C., & Greenberg, H. F. (Eds.). (1986). *Bilingualism and learning disabilities: Policy and practice for teachers and administrators.* New York: American Library Publishing Company. (NCBE Accession No. BE 016 001, 1-800-321-6223).

This book represents a collection of 12 papers related to the assessment and instruction of minority language students believed to have learning disabilities. It includes a discussion of the preparation of personnel to work in this growing field.

Model Programs for Limited English Proficient Students with Disabilities

Cegelka, P. T., Lewis, R., Rodriguez, A. M., & Pacheco, R. (1986). *Educational services to handicapped students with limited English proficiency: A California statewide study.* Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children. (NCBE Accession No. 016 599, 1-800-321-6223).

This product of a statewide survey of 104 school districts and 9 county education agencies focuses on promising practices for use with children with disabilities who have limited English proficiency.

Echevarria-Ratleff, J., & Graf, V. L. (1988). *California bilingual special education model sites (1984-86): Programs and research.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 298 710).

This paper identifies effective bilingual special education programs and instructional practices in the state of California. Factors considered include student achievement, prereferral interventions, and the interface among bilingual, special, and regular education.

New Jersey State Department of Education. (1985). *The urban initiative sourcebook: A discussion of the literature and a directory of exemplary practices and programs.* Philadelphia, PA: Author; Research for Better Schools. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 283 920).

This sourcebook prepared to assist New Jersey urban school principals and administrators presents research findings and describes exemplary programs related to the Urban Initiative, a school improvement project of the New Jersey Department of Education. The sourcebook consists of three major sections: research on effective schools and leadership; a directory of exemplary practices and programs for 11 content areas including bilingual and special education; and management of school improvement.

Rodriguez, R. F. (1988). *Bilingual special education is appropriate for Mexican-American children with mildly handicapping conditions.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 293 679).

Suggestions are offered for developing model programs for educating Mexican-American students with disabilities. The availability of bilingual education programs and school districts' language policies are critical factors in developing effective special education programs.

This Mini-Bib is selected from *An Annotated Bibliography of Research and Professional Publications Relevant to the Education of Handicapped, Limited English Proficient Students and Their Families* (FL 019059), developed by Sandra H. Fradd, Ph.D., Associate Director, Institute for Advanced Study of the Communication Processes, University of Florida Gainesville, for the FAU Multifunctional Resource Center, Ann Willig, PH.D., Director, Florida Atlantic University, MRC—MT 17, 500 NW 20th Street, Boca Raton, FL 33431.

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ERIC Digest

16

MAY 1991

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COMMUNICATING WITH CULTURALLY DIVERSE PARENTS OF EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

Teachers and other professionals providing education-related services to exceptional children from different cultural backgrounds need to be aware of unique perspectives or communication styles common to those cultures. The ways people deal with feelings—especially disappointment, anxiety, fear, embarrassment, and anger—vary considerably, and often it is not easy to discern how parents are reacting to the realization that their child has a disability. It is especially important to help parents who have been outside the mainstream of U.S. education understand the educational options available. To do this, professionals need to be sensitive to the different values, experiences, and beliefs that may be held by members of various cultural and ethnic groups toward special education.

Use language parents can understand and use sensitivity in communicating.

To facilitate communication, educators should use the following guidelines:

- Send messages home in the parent's native language.
- Use an appropriate reading level.
- Listen to messages being returned.

Courtesy, sincerity, and ample opportunity and time to convey concerns can promote communication with and participation by parents from different cultural backgrounds (Johnson & Ramirez, 1987). During meetings it is important to provide ample opportunity for parents to respond without interrupting. If a parent is formulating a response and has not expressed himself or herself quickly, this delay should not be viewed as a lack of interest in responding. Educators need to listen with empathy and realize that parents can change from feelings of trust to skepticism or curiosity as their understanding of programs and policies increases. It is important to realize that this reaction is normal and that parents may feel hostile or desperate as they attempt to sort out facts from their fundamental beliefs about education.

In communicating with families from different cultural groups, educators should keep in mind their diverse cultural styles. There is no one set of characteristics that can be ascribed to all members of any ethnic group. Instead, the cultural traits of individuals range from those traditionally attributed to the ethnic group to those that are descriptive of a person who has been totally assimilated into the majority culture (Carter & Segura, 1979). Unfortunately, much of the literature describing individuals from minority groups reinforces existing stereotypes. This digest offers some observations about different cultural styles that should be considered cautiously in communications with families of differing cultural backgrounds (Cloud & Landurand, 1988; Johnson & Ramirez, 1987; Taylor, 1989).

Sharing Space. People from different cultures use, value, and share space differently. In some cultures it is considered appropriate for people to stand very close to each other while talking, whereas in other cultures people like to keep farther apart. For example, Hispanics often view Americans as being distant because they prefer more space between speakers. On the other hand, Americans often view individuals who come too close as pushy or invading their private space.

Touching. Rules for touching others vary from culture to culture. In Hispanic and other Latin cultures, two people engaged in conversation are often observed touching and individuals usually embrace when greeting each other. In other cultures, people are more restrained in their greetings. In the Asian/Vietnamese cultures, for example, it is not customary to shake hands with individuals of the opposite sex.

Eye Contact. Among African Americans it is customary for the listener to avert the eyes, whereas Euro-Americans prefer to make direct eye contact while listening. Among Hispanics, avoidance of direct eye contact is sometimes seen as a sign of attentiveness and respect, while sustained direct eye contact may be interpreted as a challenge to authority.

Time Ordering of Interactions. The maxim "business before pleasure" reflects the "one activity at a time" mindset of U.S. mainstream culture. Some cultures, however, are polychronic, that is, people typically handle several activities at the same time. Before getting down to business, Hispanics generally exchange lengthy greetings, pleasantries, and talk of things unrelated to the business at hand. Social interactions may continue to be interwoven throughout the conversation.

Provide parents with information.

Much of the need for information can be satisfied through regularly scheduled meetings, conferences, and planning sessions for a child's individualized education program (IEP). Educators may assume that their own familiarity with public policy is shared by parents of children with disabilities. Usually, this is not the case. Most parents of culturally diverse children with disabilities need help in understanding the basic tenets of the law, including their own rights and responsibilities.

Support parents as they learn how to participate in the system.

Schools must make a sincere commitment to consider parents as partners in their children's education. Professionals who are attempting to work and communicate with parents of children with disabilities should be prepared to

support the parents' rights and responsibilities. In essence, professionals should adopt the role of advocate. Parents from culturally diverse backgrounds should be encouraged to join parent organizations and share their cultural points of view.

Educators and other professionals should recognize parents' needs for the following:

- Assurance that they should not feel guilty about their child's disability.
- Acceptance of their feelings without labeling.
- Acceptance of them as people, rather than as a category.
- Help in seeing the positive aspects of the future.
- Recognition of what a big job it is to raise a child with disabilities and help in finding programs, services, and financial resources to make it possible for them to do the job with dignity.

Using these guidelines for communication, teachers and other professionals can assist parents of culturally diverse children with disabilities not only to combat feelings of isolation, but also to achieve a sense of belonging.

Encourage parental participation at home.

A growing body of research evidence suggests that important benefits are gained by school-aged children when their parents provide support, encouragement, and direct instruction at home and when home-school communication is active. Children who receive parental help read much better than children who do not. Even instruction by highly competent specialists at school does not produce gains comparable to those obtained when students are tutored by their parents at home (Hewison & Tizard, 1980). Even illiterate parents can promote the acquisition of reading skills by motivating their children, providing an environment that promotes the acquisition of literacy skills, providing comparative and contrasting cultural information, asking the children to read to them, and encouraging verbal interaction about written material.

RESOURCES

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ERIC Excerpt

17

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ECOCULTURAL THEORY AS A CONTEXT FOR THE INDIVIDUAL FAMILY SERVICE PLAN
Abridged Version

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The family focus of PL 99-457, The Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1986, makes intuitive as well as conceptual sense; as such, it reflects the "best practices" in early intervention. Nevertheless, interventionists are rightly apprehensive as they take on this expanded role. Many of their concerns are practical. How comprehensive should the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) be in terms of delineating family "needs"? Where does professional responsibility end? What about accountability? The IFSP requires new approaches and practices from the many disciplines, institutions, and agencies that will be involved in serving young children with disabilities and their families (Johnson, McGonigel, & Kaufmann, 1989).

Although PL 99-457 mandates a family focus to early intervention, there is a limited theoretical and empirical base to guide implementation of the new law. Ecocultural theory, which considers the sociocultural environment of the child and family, is proposed as a framework for designing intervention.

Ecocultural theory is close to and consistent with recent research on families in early childhood special education. It takes the perspectives of the family (family goals, values, and needs) into account and is comprehensive in its view of the family environment. It also extends or elaborates family systems theories and ecological theories in several ways. First, ecocultural theory explicitly includes family-constructed "meaning" of their circumstances (e.g., child's disability refracted through the lens of family goals and values) as well as their proactive responses to those circumstances and meanings. Second, in ecocultural theory a critical unit of analysis is daily routines (or activity settings) that are created and sustained by ecocultural forces. Daily routines and activities are critical because they mediate ecocultural effects on the more familiar units of analysis—individuals, interaction dyads, or families. Finally, ecocultural theory is distinguished by its applicability to families in all cultures, because the theory is based on the cross-cultural literature (Weisner, 1984). The hierarchy of ecocultural niche features (see Table 1) that the theory proposes is explicitly intended to apply to all families. Each of the feature domains represents variations in family niches that have been reported in the literature as having some impact on families and child development.

Families in all culture groups will have different "niche profiles," though we predict that there will be many similarities across families. Whatever the degree of difference among culture groups, we propose that assessment of the niche domains will provide a meaningful, nondiscriminatory, and nonjudgmental description or assessment of the ecocultural niche of a family. In fact, we believe that ecocultural theory avoids invidious assessment of differences between groups by including the family's (or culture's) own values and goals within each ecocultural assessment. It also provides an empirical basis that avoids the dangers of comparisons that always favor the majority or dominant groups; culture is "unpacked" into its constituent elements, so that comparisons are based on specific circumstances. These constituent elements of culture are the ecological/cultural domains and variables presented in Table 1.

The Socially Constructed Ecocultural Niche of the Family

Ecocultural theory provides a conceptual framework that enables us to understand why some parents think, feel, and act in certain ways, while others think, feel, and act entirely differently (Burden & Thomas, 1986).

Ecocultural theory proposes that the environment around the family includes not only material conditions (income, neighborhood characteristics, and workload time and effort, for example), but also families' "meanings," values, and goals regarding their ecocultural circumstances, as well as their proactive efforts to change their niche. With regard to family meanings, family income has an impact on the child, but so does the amount the family wants to have and the meaning money has in their lives.

Families with "familistic" values develop different accommodations to raising a child with developmental delays than do those focusing primarily on career progress. Consider two families, in which both sets of parents are career-minded. All parties attach a high priority to professional advancement and financial success. But in one family, economic advantage is used to purchase high-quality child care and intervention and parental freedom to pursue career and social goals. In

TABLE 1
Domains That Constitute the Ecocultural Niche of the Family

1. Family Subsistence, the Work Cycle, and the Economic and Financial Base
2. Public Health and Demographic Characteristics of Family and Community
3. Home and Neighborhood Safety
4. The Division of Labor by Sex, Age, and Other Characteristics, Including Domestic Task and Chore Workload
5. Childcare Tasks: Who Does Childcare and How It Is Organized
6. Roles of the Father and Others in Childcare
7. Composition of Children's Peer and Play Groups: Who Participates, Age, and Sex of Groups
8. Structure and Quality of Marital Role Relationship
9. Networks, Supports, and Organizational Involvement for Women
10. Multiple Sources of Child Cultural Influence Available in Community
11. Sources of Parental Information Regarding Children and Family
12. Degree of Community Heterogeneity Influencing Family

Adapted from Weisner (1984)

another household, adhering strongly to familistic values, financial advantage is used to free up parental time to integrate a child with delays into family activities. In terms of conventional socioeconomic analyses, these two families may look the same. Knowledge about family values and how they affect the daily activities of parents and children, however, tells us that the niches of the two families have been very differently constructed.

Thus a major implication for implementation of IFSP's is the importance of family beliefs and values. Such knowledge enhances our understanding of a family's interpretation and response to an intervention plan. Traditionally, family needs assessment has focused on demographics and other descriptive information (marital status, family constellation, employment). In so doing, it has failed to identify the family's perspective or the full range of niche features.

Knowing that a mother works or is a single parent does not reflect the meaning such factors have for a child's treatment program (Chandler, Fowler, & Lubeck, 1986). But knowing that a mother (single or otherwise) believes a child with a disability should be the focus of the family, or that the child with a disability needs protection from negative social attitudes, can influence intervention planning: It suggests priorities for treatment and provides a framework for making decisions regarding the purpose, priority, intensity, or duration of the intervention (Kaiser & Hemmeter, 1989).

The intervention implications of family beliefs and values can be seen in their impact on the family's daily routine, which is an easily observable manifestation of their ecocultural niche.

For professionals, the issues at stake are pragmatic as well as conceptual: Families are likely to be more invested in attaining intervention goals congruent with high-priority family goals (Bailey et al., 1986). They are also more likely to be able to implement those professional recommendations that fit with their values and beliefs.

Constraints and Opportunities

It is not unusual for professionals to make "objective" assessments about family niches; for example, the family needs more father involvement in child care, participation in a parent support group, or opportunities for the child with a disability to have "normalizing experiences." Ecocultural theory suggests a family service plan can maximize family functioning only if it does not ignore the loading that the family gives the niche features. Recognition of this principle of the theory is already present in concerns that interventions for young children with disabilities [and families] may be "iatrogenic"; that is, that the interventions themselves may place additional stress on families (Berger & Foster, 1986; Gallagher, Beckman, & Cross, 1983; Salzinger, Antrobus, & Glick, 1980). These warnings reflect the importance of knowing the family's loading of niche features.

By attaching positive or negative valence to events and circumstances in their niche, families "decide" which are constraints as opposed to resources. Circumstances that professionals might view as positive (e.g., various social support networks) may be associated by some families with heavy costs, and hence viewed as constraints instead of resources. One mother of a 3 year old with developmental delays talks about her experiences in a community preschool:

> I find it a very isolating experience, and it's very painful for me, having nobody there. I have never felt so isolated in a school situation . . . I feel I have not connected much with the parents. I feel that they sense my child is different . . . she's just beginning to be invited to...birthday parties . . . Now that I am going with her, I'm agonizing at them because I'm always watching her behaviors and wondering if people are going to sense that she's odd. So they're difficult for me, but I think very nice for her. (REACH, Case 312)

Compare this perspective with that of another parent, who has written the following advice for professionals (Ziegler, 1989):

> Mothers should be encouraged to ensure that their children with disabilities have as much opportunity as possible to play with other infants and young children of the same age in day care, nursery school, Sunday school, and at the local playground. Inclusion in these "normal" settings will benefit both the young child and the mother. The child will forego the stigma and stunted social and emotional growth that inevitably result from segregation from his or her age peers. The mother will be able to interact with and learn from mothers of children the same age as her child, and she too, will escape some of the stigma and isolation of segregation. (p. 93)

As illustrated so clearly by these two excerpts, what is viewed as a resource by one parent may well be viewed as an unwanted constraint by another. The valence of a feature in a family's life depends on its use by and meaning to families, as well as by the inherent properties of the feature (Gallimore,

Weisner, Kaufman, & Bernheimer, 1989); it cannot be taken for granted. Professionals need to understand the valence of niche features for individual families in order to design a family service plan that provides meaningful support. Unfortunately, most traditional measures do not reveal the valence of those features of the family's environment that are assessed.

Hierarchical Nature of Ecocultural Niches

Ecocultural theory proposes that some domains are more salient for human adaptation than others—that there is a hierarchy of influence. The theory suggests that minimizing mortality and protecting the health of a child or parent, subsistence adaptations, and beliefs regarding appropriate moral and cultural conduct in one's child will take precedence over other niche domains in their influence on families (LeVine, 1977). This will be particularly evident in the case of a family with a child with delays: The threat to mortality and health is very real; the threat to future subsistence competence of the child is a serious possibility, as are the changes many parents will have to make in their own work and financial lives. The threat that the child will not learn basic moral and culturally appropriate conduct is also a serious concern. Adaptation in the face of these highest-order threats will reverberate through all the niche domains. Even where no active threat is present, mortality, subsistence, and moral-cultural training are three aspects of the econiche that influence the way each family constructs its daily routines; these are more powerful features of the ecocultural niche than other domains.

The hierarchical order of niche features means they function to set priorities. This does not mean that all families have the same priorities; the features of the niche that take priority in each household vary. Thus what is presented in Table 1 does not mean that all families are actively dealing with each niche level. In fact, variations among families in salient niche levels can become a major tool in designing Individual Family Service Plans.

Ecocultural theory supports the view that professionals, whether or not they agree with them, must accept family statements as meaningful. What matters is what is real to the family (Seligman & Darling, 1989); in other words, the family's social construction of their circumstances. In this sense, ecocultural theory is congruent with family system and environmental press theories: All predict that an individual's perception of what constitutes the most important needs at a particular time is likely to assume priority status and guide that person's behavior in certain directions (Dunst, Leet, & Trivette, 1988). What ecocultural theory adds is a specific hierarchical order in which niche features (beliefs, values, environmental presses, etc.) will take priority, and explicit inclusion of the family's proactive, social constructivist roles.

Applied to family assessment, the proposed niche hierarchy provides a valuable context. The family who presents "the problem" as the child's behavior may really be responding to subsistence issues: The child's behavior may make her unacceptable to day care providers and the mother may be in danger of losing her job, which is needed to meet the mortgage payment for a new house, which was purchased to get a safe play area requiring less parental supervision. If the mother resists adding a behavior modification program to an already crowded week, it could be quite inappropriate to treat her resistance as disinterest in actions that would assist the child. It could mean the mother considers the house and yard as more important features of the niche than a change in child-care practices.

An assessment focusing only on the child's problems would fail to appreciate the powerful forces that are shaping and influencing the family's perception of the child and the priorities they recognize. Regarding intervention, the way in which families organize the daily routine and the choices they make are more likely to make sense if viewed from the hierarchical framework; hence, the corresponding recommendations made by intervenors are more likely to make sense to the family.

Ecocultural theory helps us listen to families in a way that honors the spirit and intent of PL 99-457.

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Seligman, M., & Darling, R. (1989). *Ordinary families, special children.* New York: Guilford Press.

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Mini Bib

18

MAY 1991

PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE EDUCATION PROCESS OF CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE EXCEPTIONAL LEARNERS

Sandra H. Fradd

Baecher, R. E., Cichelli, T., & Baratta, A. (1989). *Correlates of successful dropout prevention strategies for at-risk children in urban schools.* (NCBE Accession No. BE 017 030, 1-800-321-6223).

This paper discusses the evaluation of Fordham University's Stay in School Partnership Project. The participants were three elementary schools in a large East Harlem public school district, 66% Hispanic and 24% black. The children and their families received a comprehensive set of services including play therapy, counseling, advocacy, consultation, family problem solving, tutoring, individualized instruction, and parental workshops. Data were collected over the first 2 years of the project on attendance rates, reading and math performance, self-esteem, and adequacy of child care. The major findings were that the project decreased absenteeism significantly with support, and that significant correlates existed between self-esteem and achievement. The most significant change in the second year of the project was increased parental involvement when child care assistance was available.

Brandenberg-Ayers, S. (1990). In V. I. Correa & S. H. Fradd (Eds.), *Module 4: Working with Parents.* Gainesville: The University of Florida Bilingual/ESOL Special Education Collaboration and Reform Project.

This module addresses such issues as dealing with the importance of parent-school collaboration, understanding the attitudes and beliefs of non-English-language-background (NELB) parents and students, assessing the needs of NELB families, establishing effective communication with parents in multicultural settings, and developing plans for parent involvement and for strong school-community relationships.

Carrasquillo, A. (1986). The parent factor: Teaching language skills to limited English proficient learning disabled students. Journal of Reading, Writing and Learning Disabilities International, 2(1), 57–71. (ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, 2, 89. EJ 341 247, Dialog).

Case studies are presented of Puerto Rican, Haitian, and Chinese families to illustrate how schools can involve parents of limited English proficient, students with learning disabilities to provide home reinforcement in language skills development.

Dale, T. C. (1986). *Limited English proficient students in the schools: Helping the newcomer.* (ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 279 206).

Limited English proficient students and their parents need a network of support to familiarize themselves with school routines, to understand and comply with school rules and regulations, take advantage of many school-related services, and successfully follow their course of study. Administrators can help by having written information available and by having interpreters to assist students and families. The most important and challenging task for staff is finding ways to integrate students into academic activities. This requires time and resources, and can include assessing students' level of academic skills in their native language, assessing English proficiency, and scheduling intensive English instruction. Administrators can also support the learning process by conducting regular discussion sessions with school staff and resource people about the students' languages, cultures and special needs within the school system. Students can also provide support by participating in a buddy system pairing limited English proficient students with a native English-speaking peer or a student who speaks the native language of the newly arrived student. Administrators and teachers can also assist by encouraging students and families to participate in social and academic activities, and teaching about and celebrating their native cultures.

Etter, E. B. (1986, March). *What is occurring in higher education and how does this affect the training of educators who teach the handicapped population? A response to the "Training of parents of exceptional children" TOPEC Project* Director's Paper presented at the International Conference of the Association for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities, New York. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 287 224).

Observations are offered on teacher education from a supervisor of student teachers who is also the parent of a child with a learning disability. Topics include the phasing out traditional undergraduate teacher training programs, minority teacher recruitment and retention, inclusion of special education programs and programs which promote cultural pluralism, and participation of parents in the educational process.

Hampton, B. R., & Fernandez, M. C. (1985). *Parental involvement in the special education process [a literature review].* Austin: The University of Texas, Handicapped Minority Research Institute on Language Proficiency. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 261 483).

The annotated bibliography examines parental involvement in special education. Citations are presented and information examined for the following topic areas: (1) legal rights, (2) theoretical models, (3) parent-school relations, (4) mainstreaming, (5) training, (6) counseling, (7) consumer perspectives, and (8) bibliographies. Entries include general information on parent-school rights and responsibilities with a focus on practical approaches to fostering parent involvement.

Kahan, E., & Reilly-McDonnell, F. (1986). *Parent's handbooks on special education.* Arlington, VA: Arlington County Public Schools. (NCBE Accession No. BE 016 605, 1-800-321-6223.

This three volume multilingual handbook is intended for parents of limited English proficient students who are referred for special education evaluation. In clear, simple language these volumes discuss learning problems, outline the steps of the referral process, define terms, and explain legal rights. Information is available in English, Spanish, Khmer, Vietnamese, Lao, and Farsi.

National Information Center for Handicapped Children and Youth. (nd). *Special help for special children.* Washington, DC: Author (Box 11492, 1-800-999-5599).

This is a low reading level, highly illustrated guide to PL 94-142 written for parents who read at the third grade level in English or Spanish.

Simich-Dudgeon, C. (1986). *Parent involvement and the education of limited English proficient students.* (ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 279 205).

This paper summarizes information on parent involvement in terms of general activities, specific aspects of involvement for parents of limited English proficient students, the general need for parent involvement, needs for parents of limited English proficient students, and ways in which school districts can initiate involvement programs.

Smith, M. J., & Ryan, A. S. (1987). Chinese-American families of children with developmental disabilities: An exploratory study of reactions to service providers. *Mental Retardation, 25*(6), 345–350 (EJ 364 863 Dialog).

Interviews with 59 Chinese parents of children with developmental disabilities uncovered some of the problems these parents experienced because service providers did not speak their language. Results indicate that the lack of language-appropriate information concerning the nature of the disabling conditions and the course of interventive actions which parents could take seriously affected both parents and children.

Western Regional Resource Center. (1989). *Reaching out: Proceedings from a special education symposium on cultural differences and parent programs.* Eugene: University of Oregon. (NCBE Accession No. BE 017 006, 1-800-321-6223).

This publication contains the proceedings from a symposium held in 1986 to assist professionals in describing and understanding cultural and familiar characteristics of various ethnic groups with regard to the special education needs of their children.

This Mini-Bib is selected from *An Annotated Bibliography of Research and Professional Publications Relevant to the Education of Handicapped, Limited English Proficient Students and Their Families* (FL 019059), developed by Sandra H. Fradd, Ph.D., Associate Director, Institute for Advanced Study of the Communication Processes, University of Florida Gainesville, for the FAU Multifunctional Resource Center, Ann Willig, Ph.D., Director, Florida Atlantic University, MRC—MT 17, 500 NW 20th Street, Boca Raton, FL 33431.

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